THE METAPHYSICS OF BERKELEY

CRITICALLY EXAMINED

IN THE LIGHT OF

MODERN PHILOSOPHY

BY

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PREFACE.

"It is Plato's remark, in his *Theaetetus*," observes Berkeley himself, "that while we sit still we are never the wiser, but going into the river, and moving up and down, is the way to discover its depth and shallows." If search for truth is the sacred duty and burning passion of the human race, honest criticism is undoubtedly one of the surest roads to attain this cherished ideal. Any really progressive step in the development of philosophical speculation--and in fact any other branch of human learning—necessarily presupposes a critical examination of the results achieved by the predecessors, a sifting of the chaff from the corn therein. This, I believe, will serve as a sufficient apology for the publication of the present critical examination of one of the most interesting and novel metaphysical systems ever propounded in the history of modern philosophy.

A number of reasons have induced me to choose Berkeley's philosophy in particular for purposes of this critical examination. It has been found from experience that Berkeley is one of the best stimulants for speculative thought. Arranged in a most ingenious manner, and couched in a most clever and ambiguous terminology, his arguments for Immaterialism, to quote the celebrated words of David

Hume, "admit of no answer, and produce no conviction. Their only effect is to cause that momentary amazement, and irresolution, and confusion, which is the result of scepticism." I still remember vividly the great mental confusion—a sudden " amazement and irresolution"–which was caused in me when I chanced to go through Berkeley's arguments for the first time, and which in my case continued unabated till I could find out a satisfactory answer to them. Add to this greatly stimulating effect, the fact that Berkeley's language is most easy, lucid, plausible, and yet very charming—one can go on reading page after page from his *Principles of Human Knowledge* or his *Dialogues* without feeling any inclination to discontinue—and therefore most suited to initiate a tyro into the mysteries of metaphysics, and you will get a fairly adequate explanation of the extreme favour with which Berkeley has been received in most of the Indian Universities, as well as of my choice of his philosophy for the purposes of this treatise.

But there is, besides this, one more important reason that may well be advanced in this connection. The author was struck with considerable wonder and delight when in the course of his study of the Indian Philosophy—and specially of Shankaracharya's commentary on the *Brahma-Sutras*—he found out that Berkeley's writings bear in many

respects a very striking resemblance to the idealistic doctrines of a certain sect of the ancient Indian philosophers, known by the name of *Vidnyanavadin Bauddhas*. Having come across this striking resemblance between a European philosopher of the eighteenth century and certain Eastern philosophers that lived centuries prior to him, the author's curiosity was naturally roused and he proceeded to compare the answers given by modern philosophers in the West to the idealistic doctrines of Bishop Berkeley with those given by Shankaracharya and the other Indian scholars of old to the arguments of the *Vidnyanavadin Bauddhas*. Whatever interesting comparisons between the oriental and the occidental systems of philosophy are to be found in this treatise, are the results of this search after a resemblance between the doctrines of metaphysical speculators separated from one another by centuries of years.

In this connection, I may well digress a little to refer to a most regrettable fact the consideration of which has impelled me very strongly to insert the copious comparisons between the Indian and the western schools of thinking to be found in this treatise, in spite of all considerations of space. The author was extremely sorry to note the very sad state of affairs regarding the treatment accorded to the study of Indian Philosophy, in the Indian

universities, a considerable majority of which have so arranged their courses of studies for the various degree examinations, that it is very easily possible for an *Indian* student :to qualify himself for the M. A. degree in the subject of Philosophy—the highest degree conferred by the universities after a regular written examination—from an *Indian* university, without having any considerable —and in some cases, even the least—knowledge of *Indian* Philosophy. Just imagine such an Indian M. A. in Philosophy meeting a foreigner abroad or even in India, and being confronted with a request from the latter to supply him some information regarding the fundamental principles of Indian Philosophy. It would not certainly be very pleasant to think of the opinion the foreigner will form regarding the Indian student as well as the Indian universities, when he finds that living abroad he has had greater acquaintance with the essentials of Indian Philosophy than the Indian Master of Arts in Philosophy ! Will any English university ever confer such a degree upon any student to whom all English Philosophy is but Greek and Latin ? Or, can any one ever hope to receive such a degree from a German university without having any acquaintance with the philosophical writings of the great German speculators like Kant or Hegel ? And this, when Philosophy has been repeatedly declared to be the very soul of Indian civilization,

as it is not of the Western one ! If India is really famous for any one thing, it is her Philosophy. If any thing has saved the Indian religion and culture from the fierce ruinous attacks of the foreigners–with the fanatic's sword or the missionary's persuasion—it is her immortal Philosophy. If India commands any respect from the foreign nations in her present dilapidated downtrodden condition, it is, once more, her unique Philosophy. It is certainly high time that such a suicidal state of affairs were immediately mended and Indian Philosophy placed in its proper position. The author's only hope is that the numerous references to Indian Philosophy in this book may act as an effective whet and lead his readers to a zealous and detailed study of the philosophical works of the ancient Indian scholars.[1]

The author is painfully conscious of many a defect and shortcoming in the present work. While some may find fault with its language, others may have good reasons to be dis-satisfied with the treatment of the subject matter itself. So far as the author himself is concerned, however, he has certainly spared no pains to deal with the subject in as convenient and exhaustive a manner as possible.

1. In this connection I may refer with pleasure to the Indian Institute of Philosophy, Amalner, where facilities for such studies are available.

One thing, nevertheless, he must plainly confess. Due to the inadvertency of the proof-corrector, the work of proof-correction has been considerably defective, and a number of petty mistakes have therefore crept in, none of which, however, it is hoped, is likely to mislead the reader.[1]

Before bringing to a close this brief preface, however, I must express my sincere thanks to professors V. B. Shreekhande, M. A. L. L. B. and D. M. Borgaonkar, M. A., for kind encouragement and sympathetic suggestions made by them from time to time.

Thanks are also due to Mr S. K. Bhandari, Proprietor, Sardar Printing Works, for doing the work promptly. A more honest and hardworking press-owner, knowing full well the dignity of personal labour, it will be difficult to meet with.

Last but not least, my highest obligations are due to my brother, Mr B. W. Kaveeshwar, B. A. of whose selfless help and labour of love, every page of the book bears an invisible stamp.

Mandleshwar,
Thursday, 1st June 1933. } G. W. K.

1. Except possibly one, on page 146, line 9, where the word 'mediate' should be substituted for 'immediate'.

To

My Parents,

Vasudeorao & Gopikabai Kaveeshwar.

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BOOK I.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

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CHAPTER I.

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION.

It is a fact wellknown to all that the beginnings of many a vital and important thing are unknown to human intelligence even in the present advanced stage of knowledge and learning. Mere speculations apart, who can give with certainty, for example, even a rough idea of the true origin of this universe of ours,—this vast and to all individual purposes endless mass of earth with all its organic and inorganic inhabitants, the baffling little principle of the soul or spirit that escapes all inquiries as well as the dead powerless things of matter in their legions ? The universe has for ever been an enigma to philosophical thinkers of all ages and nations. How did the organic life originate ? Whence did it come, and out of what did it first arise ? Can any one answer these questions satisfactorily even today ? Take again the case of the vegetable life. Did the tree originally preceed the seed or the seed the tree ? Can there ever be a seed that could have come into existence in the absolute absence of a fruit on a tree, and, on the other hand, can there be a tree that

could have ever seen the light of the day without a seed? Stone crumbled into dust is earth and earth pressed into hard solid mass is stone. What human being knows which came first? The truth is that in these and the like matters we know no first and last but only before and after, no absolute beginnings or ends but only relative ones. We may say that *this* tree came before *that* seed but not whether tree as such came before any seed was to be seen.

But these are by no means the only matters in which man is rendered powerless to trace their absolute beginnings. The case of philosophical speculations also forms a rough analogy to them. It is equally impossible to trace the exact person who first, without being influenced in the least by his predecessors—not to speak of his contemporaries—invented a particular theory either in philosophy or in science. The difficulty in deciding whether Idealism or Realism struck the human fancy first is by no means lesser than the one encountered in deciding between the similar rival claims of the tree and the seed. Again, curiously enough, we often find that a particular theory enters simultaneously more than one human brain. Charles Darwin is generally recognised as the originator of the Evolution Theory. But it is now definitely known that just before Darwin published his wonderful hypothesis, certain other persons

Exact beginnings of philosophical theories are unknown.

had also dimly hit upon the same idea; the theory, in other words, was already 'in the air', when Darwin expressed it in clear definite language. William James' peculiar theory concerning the emotions is famous; but students of psychology know very well that Lange, a professor on the continent, had hinted at this very theory at about the same time. The reason why in all these and many other similar cases, the same idea is found to be suggested simultaneously to more than one man is that every inventor of an apparantly new idea owes much to the influence of his predecessors in the world of knowledge. Consequently, when common influences work on different minds, there is no wonder that analogous ideas are propounded by more than one man at about the same time. Our discussion so far has made it abundantly clear that no one man can ever be reasonably credited with having been the sole inventor and propounder of any particular philosophical or scientific theory. He might have expressed in definite and clear language what before was vague and only dimly grasped, nay, more, he might have enhanced it, might have examined, investigated and brought to light some hitherto unnoticed aspects of the old problem—but, for all that, we may yet safely say that without the help of the results attained by his predecessors he could not have propounded the theory that we now find credited to his name. It is difficult to believe that Newton,

Galileo, Darwin, Bose or any other inventor would have been able to bring forth the theories that they have actually invented, had each of them been born a thousand years before his proper time.

Certain things emerge out clearly from this. It is now obvious that in order to achieve our main object in this treatise, to wit, to have a clear grasp of and to examine critically the philosophy of Bishop George Berkeley, we must study to a certain extent the systems propounded by his philosophical predecessors. Berkeley without his predecessors we have little to do with. It is the Berkeley of the 18th century, who came after a long line of philosophical thinkers had already offered their quota of intellectual investigation into problems at once deep and subtle, and in whom were unmistakably mingled the silent effects of his study of the different systems of the various philosophers that came before him, the 'problematical Idealism' of Descartes, the 'plain historic method' of John Locke, the Occasionalism of Geulinx and Malebranche, the superb monistic philosophy of Spinoza, as well as those of a host of others ancient as well as modern—yes, it is this Berkeley who shall be the object of our critical study in the chapters to follow.

Importance of the study of the pre--Berkeleyan philosophers.

It is at this stage, however, that a useful hint may be given to the reader before we embark on our

chosen task. It is often found difficult, especially by the beginner, to remember the systems of the different philosophers, the reason being that he is often confronted with a disconnected account of the different philosophical systems. It is due to this that the history of philosophy often assumes the appearance of a collection of different unrelated units put together. But in such a narration on the part of a writer and a study on the part of a reader the most important principle of evolution or development is invariably lost sight of. The history of philosophy is essentially the history of one continuous chain of attempts on the part of different successive thinkers to solve the main basic problems underlying our very existence in this universe. These attempts are certainly *not* unconnected, and when studied in the light of their interrelation form a most interesting account. The reader is therefore asked to view the following account of the pre-Berkeleyan modern European philosophers in this light, so that he will find it most easy to obtain a clear understanding of all the different systems as well as to remember them fully. He should especially look at the following account as one continuous attempt to solve, *inter alia*, two chief problems—(i) nature of mind and matter; (ii) and their relation to one another.

Our study of the pre-Berkeleyan philosophers will begin with the philosophy of Rene Descartes,

the famous French philosopher. Descartes has very truly been called the founder and the father of modern European philosophy. It was his system and his peculiar method that gave an altogether new turn to philosophy, and sought to give it a sounder foundation than was ever given in the dark centuries immediately preceeding him. It is very interesting to trace the steps of this most important philosophical experiment, and to examine how far, if at all, it was crowned with success.

Rene Descartes, his philosophy and his method.

The method of Descartes cannot be understood properly unless one clearly bears in mind the state of philosophical studies immediately preceeding him. The field was then greatly occupied by vague specula tions, more or less groundless suppositions, and confused notions concerning mind, matter and other important objects of metaphysical inquiry. The keen sight of the French scholar soon perceived that philosophy cannot really progress on such uncertain foundation. He therefore resolved to wage a fierce battle against all those prevalent suppositions which in his opinion had no sure foundation. This wonderful purge he sought to effect by means of his peculiar method of doubting everything. He began to doubt everything that sense and imagination ever conveyed to his brain, intending thus to reach certain simplest propositions which it would be impossible to doubt further. His method was then to deduce

inferences with mathematical certainty from these most simple fundamental axioms. Descartes, as Weber remarks, was primarily a mathematician and next a philosopher. He was greatly fascinated by the certainties reached in mathematics which deduces greatest truths from simplest axioms, and wanted to apply this method to philosophy, thus intending to introduce in it certain conclusions instead of the then prevalent vague speculative ones. Novel and interesting as the Cartesian method undoubtedly is, its application too is no less worthy of careful attention and study on our part. The aim of Descartes in applying this method to philosophy was, as already remarked above, to discover certain simple fundamental propositions upon which, as upon the axioms in mathematics a whole superstructure of philosophical knowledge could be safely and surely raised.

Such a perfect foundation, at once surest and simplest, Descartes discovered when in the course of his universal scepticism he arrived at the problem of the existence of his own self. This he could neither deny nor even doubt, for the very doubting and denying implies some one who doubts and denies. Here, then, was a firm foundation for all future philosophy to rest safely upon. '*Je pense donc je suis*' or '*Cogito ergo sum*' was thus the fundamental axiom of the Cartesian philosophy. 'I

think ', said Descartes ' therefore I am '. [1] I exist and can no more doubt my own existence, for even as I am doubting it, the existence of my own self as the doubtor of this doubt is invariably presupposed.

This, however, is only the foundation and the entire structure of human knowledge yet remains to be erected. Here Descartes' progress would have certainly been blocked, had it not been for a strange procedure that he adopted. I find, he proceeds further, an idea within myself which, I am sure, could never have been produced by my own little self. This is the idea of the Infinite and perfect God. Such an idea could never owe its origin to an imperfect finite being like myself. It must have therefore been put there in my brain by the Infinite God himself, and His existence is thus consequently established, for He must first exist ere he can put any such idea in me. The existence of one's own self and the Divine Being having thus been arrived at, as he believed, with perfect certainty, he now proceeds, to deal with the existence of the vast material world we perceive every minute around us. This, he now concludes at once, must be real since all our knowledge and ideas of it owe their origin to God, and He, a perfect being as he is, will certainly not deceive us.

[1] For a detailed elucidation of this very important Cartesian principle, *vide infra* Book III, Chap. I.

It was thus that Descartes sought to establish by 'certain' proof the existence of his three realities, God or the Infinite Mind; the finite human mind or soul as it is often called; and thirdly the body or matter. It follows from this that principally there are only two basic kinds of realities into which all that exists and ever existed, the entire choir of heaven and furniture of earth may be divided,—mind or soul, and body or matter. Now it is here that the question naturally raises its head as to the nature of these two opposite realities and their relation towards one another. Descartes' contribution to the solution of this most important metaphysical problem is singular in its importance, and has for ever been a constant target of attack on the part of successive writers on this subject. Descartes maintained that these two realities are entirely distinct from and opposed to one another and have absolutely nothing in common save probably the fact of existence. Matter, with him, is what mind is not, and mind, what matter is not. This doctrine of Descartes that mind and matter, the two basic realities of this universe, are entirely opposed to one another, is known in philosophy as the Cartesian Dualism. The essential attribute of mind is consciousness and of matter, extension. There is no consciousness out of mind (i. e. in matter), and there is no mind without consciousness. Consequently there exists, in the opinion of the French

The Cartesian Dualism.

philosopher, neither any absolute atom nor any empty space, for the former implies a body without any extension and the latter, extension without any body in it. The nature of mind is thus adequately summarised for him in the attribute of consciousness while of matter in extension. Matter is extended unconscious substance, while mind is unextended conscious substance.

A few words will certainly not be out of place here if devoted to Descartes' theory of sense-perception. As the spirit was declared to be a substance that was the bearer of all spiritual attributes, so matter was to be the bearer of all the material attributes. What we—i. e. our senses—immediately perceive is only the attributes of matter and not the matter itself. The thing in itself, the *ding an sich* of Immanuel Kant, the substance proper in which all the attributes resided, is never an object of perception. Now, these attributes of matter, Descartes divided in two parts—primary qualities and secondary qualities. While the secondary qualities exist only in our minds, the primary qualities exist really in matter, and our ideas (i. e. our sense-impressions) in the case of these latter are the ectypes of the originals existing in each material object independently of our perception.

Theory of perception.

Every thing as we know has both a good and a bad aspect, and so has the Cartesian Dualism. Thus, in spite of anything that may be urged regarding the defects of this doctrine, it must be admitted that for all its numerous and obvious set-backs, the Cartesian philosophy furnished great benefits to the progress of philosophical studies at that particular time. Philosophy made an immense advance in the hands of Rene Descartes—far greater an advance than was made in centuries before him. No science can proceed well, and not much can be augured in its favour, if it does not define its terms properly, so as to leave no ground for any confusion between the most vital objects of its study. The clear clean-cut definitions of mind and matter as conceived by Descartes helped much to rid the philosophical speculations of many confused suppositions and notions regarding either of these. His definition of the soul as an unextended conscious being at once purged out many hazy materialistic notions associated with it before him; and similarly was the idea of matter divested of all its vague and confused spiritualistic associations. Besides, the importance that he placed in the self-consciousness, helping as it did to clear off the equivocations and mystical notions from the concept of the *anima* or the soul, prepared the way for the modern empirical psychology which now principally holds the field. Since his age, the importance of his introspective

A Critical estimate of the Cartesian Dualism.

standpoint has been unhesitatingly recognised by one and all. In fine, the importance and the virtue of the Cartesian philosophy can be summarily grasped when it is remembered that it is the author of this fruitful philosophy that has been unanimously acclaimed as the father and the founder of modern philosophy.

On the contrary, however, its virtue must not make us blind to its defects and we must never lose sight of the fact that though the Meditations of Descartes brought about an immense advance in the philosophical studies, it was by no means an unmixed advance. The benefits it conferred brought in their train other new defects. Formerly mind and matter, the two fundamental elements, were, in the absence of clear definitions, often unwittingly confused together, the qualities being often attributed to one that properly belonged to the other. But now, on the other hand, they were set too much in oppo sition to one other; so much so, that they were declared to be absolute contradictories. The result was that the '*Res Cogitans*' as well as ths '*Res Extensa*' were soon found to be impossible unreal abstractions. Matter was defined to be extended unconscious substance. But does not this definition leave out the equally important attribute of energy or force, that was to play so important a part in the subsequent speculations ? Is not this an instance of carrying the principle of simplicity and clearness to an

unjustifiable extent ? Again, as Gassendi and Arnold rightly asked, is consciousness the only attribute of the soul ? Besides, what is one of the most important objections urged against the Cartesian Dualism, if matter and mind, body and soul, are in reality so entirely opposed to one another as to have absolutely nothing is common, how can any interaction, any reciprocal reaction between the two be ever explained ? But it is clear as daylight that such interaction does take place every moment of our life. Descartes himself had perceived the difficulty. The different states of the body do produce affections in the soul; and the soul too in its turn does guide the body with a view to its welfare, and does produce motions in it in accordance with its will. How is this rendered possible ? It was the greatest condemnation of the Cartesian philosophy that it could not satisfactorily explain this interaction between mind and matter. We shall soon trace the attempts made by the succeeding writers towards the solution of this most important problem.

An impartial and reasonable critic of the Cartesian philosophy will, however, gladly admit that in so far as the reform in the method and general outlook of philosophical investigation is concerned, the Cartesian philosophy stands on solid ground and can neither be assailed on this point nor suffer its virtue to be belittled. The advent of the

Cartesian philosophy was unmistakably an advent of free thinking, reason, and independence. It was a counterblast to all blind faith in traditional theories, as well as to a blind reverence for authority. In spite of any thing that may be said regarding the virtue or otherwise of the details of the definitions offered by the Father of modern philosophy, there is no doubt that in themselves they are a clear proof of their author's courage and independence of thought, of his fearless opposition to tradition, and of his bold repudiation of unreasonable authority. And so far as this reform is concerned, so for as it is interpreted as a clarion call to freethought, it undoubtedly furnished incalculable benefits to the progress of philosophical studies.

Descartes and Berkeley.

It will certainly not be out of place if we pause here a little to consider the relation of our author to the Father of the modern European philosoply, and to examine the influence of the Cartesian philosophy over the Irish Bishop. Berkeley like Locke and others borrowed much from the French philosopher. In fact, as Reid maintained afterwards, from Deseartes to Berkeley aud even Hume it is all a continuous development of one system of philosophy. We can clearly trace the strict Cartesian Dualism in the philosophy of Berkeley; [1] and his

1 *Vide, infra* Book III Chap I.

definition of the soul has much in common with the Cartesian one. The introspective standpoint so prominent in Berkeley is nothing if not Cartesian in origin; while even a cursory perusal will bring out the fact that *Cogito ergo sum* holds a prominent place in the Berkeleyan treatises as well. Again, the absolute inertness of matter is a result of the Cartesian imfluence. Of course, it is never meant that Berkeley differs in no important respect from Descartes. There are many—some at least among them being major—differences between the two philosophers, which will be pointed out as we proceed with our work. What is meant is only that in spite of these differences there is much in Berkeley that is Cartesian in nature and origin. In fine, we may say that roughly speaking, the Berkeleyan philosophy is more or less an intelligent attempt to render the Cartesian philosophy more consistent.

The Cartesian School. The Occasionalistic philosophy.

We have already seen above how the strict dualism between mind and matter, which was the central theme of the philosophy of Descartes, rendered any explanation of the interaction between mind and matter impossible. The difficulty was so obvious and the objection so fatal to the Cartesian Dualism that the urgent necessity of finding out some solution or other was

soon perceived by the followers of Descartes, or the Cartesians as they are often called. Now, the real solution would have been to alter the dogmatic unreal definitions themselves, taking one's stand on the firm rock of everyday practical experience. But it took centuries to do so. The immediate followers of Descartes, prominent among whom were Malebranche and Geulinx, wanted both to stick to the dogmatic definitions of the master as well as to explain the fact of experience. They therefore invented a novel theory that every time there is any interaction between mind and matter, it is really God who intervens and brings about the result, either of these two only serving as an *occasion* for Him to do so. Thus, for instance, when at the time of each sensation, modifications in the body produce effects in the mind, the bodily affections do not directly and immediately affect the mind, but only serve as an *occasion* for God to intervene who finally brings about the result in the mind; the reverse happening in all voluntary actions when the soul affects the body. This theory is technically known by the name of *Occasionalism.*

Failure of the Occasionalistic school.

Such a hypothesis, however, can never be expected to succeed in serious philosophical studies. It was only an attempt to substitute unwarranted superstitious beliefs in place of reasoned arguments. Accordingly, it was soon in the suds and ultimately

thrown out. It in fact, never commanded many followers, and short-lived as it was destined to be, was soon accorded a decent burial. It virtually implied that man is but a nominal cause of the movements in his own body, the real cause being God himself. It is thus worthless not only metaphysically but ethically too. Besides, there is another strong objection to the Occasionalistic philosophy. The intervention of God was suggested because matter was considered impotent to affect immediately the finite mind; but is not God himself after all a spirit or mind, though an Infinite one? How can, then, matter and the Infinite Spirit interact? The same old question thus crops up again.

The Materialism of Hobbes.

The Occasionalistic philosophy thus failed to solve satisfactorily the problem of the relation and interaction between mind and matter. Hobbes and other materialists of his school offered a solution on quite a different line. While the Cartesians held that matter was inert, the only power residing in the spirits, the materialists turned the tables and argued that matter alone possessed all power. Motion was the central theme of the philosophy of Hobbes. The act of perception which was looked upon by the Cartesians as an instance of the interaction between mind and matter, Hobbes attempted to explain on purely materialistic lines. The Hobbists thus attempted to solve the

Cartesian difficulty by attempting to eliminate one factor of the duality itself. But such an explanation, which besides attempted to take away all power from the spirits, could never really be acceptable to the philosophical world. Some more reasonable solution of the problem had therefore to be offered, and the philosophical world was soon favoured with the introduction into the field of the famous subtle system of philosophy propounded by Benedict Spinoza.

The Superb Monism of Spinoza.

Spinoza has rightly been declared the central thinker of the seventeenth century. It is in his writings that we can trace a sincere attempt to reconcile the different antagonistic systems of thought that otherwise appeared quite impossible to reconcile. His was the great monistic system, that attempted to do away with dualism of all sorts, and which, in its maintainance of only one ultimate substance, in its theory of immanent causation, as well as in its high thinking and deep reasoning can well stand on a par with the famous Advaita philosophy of Shree Shankaracharya in India. Spinozism in all its branches is far and wide, and we shall here supply only a barest outline of those of its aspects that directly concern us in this place.

While Descartes had on the one hand defined substance as that which needs nothing beyond itself for its existence, he, on the other hand, somewhat inconsistently admitted the existence of a plurality of substances. Now, strictly speaking, such a substance can only be *one*. The material world in the Cartesian philosophy cannot really be termed a substance since it admittedly depends on God for its existence. Spinoza at once boldly corrected the inconsistency, and maintained accordingly that there is in reality one and only one substance; and that all the other things are but *its modes* and not different 'substances'. Mind and matter were therefore no longer two different antagonistic substances absolutely opposed to one another, but only two different *modes of the same substance*. With this basic proposition Spinoza attempted to solve the Cartesian puzzle of the interaction between mind and matter, by repudiating altogether the strict dualism itself.

The Cartesian dualism repudiated.

God, in the Spinozaistic metaphysics, is the only substance and has infinite attributes of which we know only two, viz, thought and extension. These attributes are further modified thus forming the various things and beings that we see around us in this universe. Extension, when modified, forms the bodies, while the minds are the modes of thought. No leap from the one attribute to the other is possible in the opinion of Spinoza.

Spinoza's doctrine of immanent causality.

He therefore rejects all attempts at explaining the material phenomena by the mental or the *vice versa*. Again, Spinoza's treatment of the causal relation deserves special attention on our part. When he maintains that all the objects of our experience in this universe are ultimately caused by God and are nothing but modes of the Divine Substance, his statement has a very peculiar meaning. In the ordinary parlance the cause is generally supposed to be different from its effect. With Spinoza, however, the things are *not different* from their cause the God. He is, in other words, not only the efficient cause of the universe, but the *immanent* cause as well.[1] Now, such a view that the entire

1 Advaita philosophers of the Shankaracharya school hold a similar view, which they express by declaring that God (or the *Brahman* as they call it) is not only the *nimitta karana* (the 'efficient cause') of this universe, but the *Upadana karana* (the immanent cause) as well. They adduce in illustration of these causes the case of the potter and his pots, where the potter is only the efficient cause of the pots, while the clay *which cannot be said to be different from the pots*, is their Upadana or immanent cause.

Besides the theory of immanent causation, there are some more points of agreement between Shankaracharya and Spinoza. Both maintain that ultimately there is only *one* substance, as also place an equal importance in the intuitive or direct form of knowledge, in which the finite soul is said to come in direct contact with the ultimate reality that he worships.

universe—including the ordinary inanimate things of every day experience such as the stones, pots, books and the like—is *not different* from its creator the God, is at once strange and shocking to the ordinary man. Accordingly, Spinoza was actually denounced as a black atheist, and a foul enemy of the prevalent religion.

The above succinct account of the great philosophy of Spinoza will easily bring home to the reader's mind the advantages it possessed over the previous systems. Its special virtue, as compared with the Cartesian philosophy, consisted in realising boldly that thought and extension do not necessarily presuppose two different substances. But unfortunately he still held fast to the Cartesian conception of the body as mere extension and of the soul as no more than thought. Besides, there is another objection urged against him. He attributes to one and the same substance two absolutely contradictory qualities, extension and non-extension, consciousness and unconsciousness. Does he not thereby violate the law of contradiction? Again, all may not see him eye to eye regarding his identity hypothesis, while one learned critic has actually accused him of having confused the psychological problem of the relation between mind and body with the epistemological problem between knowledge and its objects.[1] But

Some points of criticism.

1 See, Hoffding, *History of modern Philosophy* Vol. 1. p. 311.

by far the most important peculiarity of the Spinozaistic system that greatly influenced through reaction the subsequent development of philosophical thought was his extreme insistence on the Absolute One with the consequent disregard of the individuality of finite individuals. Spinoza is therefore rightly accused of having sacrificed the many on the alter of the One. But the reaction to such a thorough-going denial of the individuality of the finite beings was naturally an equally strong one as is seen in the subsequent philosophy of Leibniz. The latter, as we shall soon see, maintained the absolute individuality of all finite beings as strongly as his great predecessor had denied it.

The Monadology of Leibniz.

It was the presence of these as well as some other defects in the philosophy of Spinoza that paved an easy way for the advent of the Leibnizian Monadology, which attempted to combine whatsoever was good in the various systems that preceeded it. From Spinoza Leibniz accepted the theory of the identity between the mind and body, but only after reconciling it to his own doctrine of monads. From the Cartesians he accepted the definition of Substance, and attempted to adapt this too—though rather unsuccessfully–to his own system. His chief merit consisted in stressing the extreme importance of the concept of *force* which was unsympathetically neglected by the previous philosophers.

According to Leibniz whatever exists must be individual. Reality lies only in such absolute individuals. These individuals are, further, by no means in intercommunication with one another, though each of them has an internal unity of its own. The universe, in other words, is, to Leibniz, a cosmopolitan republic of segragated and absolutely unrelated individuals, having a perfect internal unity in themselves. Indeed, as if to compensate for the absence of external relations, the internal unity is held to be so perfect that all the changing states of each individual are declared to be internally related and regulated according to definite laws by the help of which we can, given sufficient knowledge of a monad, predict all its future states.

This absolute self-contained individual wherein and wherein alone true reality resides according to Leibniz is technically termed by him a 'monad'. Each thing in this universe is composed of infinite monads. Their chief characteristic is the possession of force, the ultimate ground of all motion. Though particular motions might originate and cease, the force remains constant. According to the Leibnizian definition, this force or energy is "that in the present state of things which brings about a change in the future."

We now come to the most important portion of the Leibnizian monadology. To Leibniz, all nature

is animated. Every object in this universe consists of infinite monads which are the same in regard to their essential nature, but differ only in their degree of development. The soul is only one monad; but the body too is composed of countless monads. Leibniz thus attempts to do away with the Cartesian dualism. Matter, for him, is essentially unreal; for, whatever appears to us as inert matter is in essence composed of monads, and hence ultimately spiritual in nature. The inert materialness is only an *appearance*, due to the lack of proper development on the part of some monads. We thus find that Berkeley and Leibniz finally end with analogous conclusions regarding the existence of matter, though they neither take their start from a common position nor follow a common method.

Berkeley and Leibniz arrive at analogous conclusions.

The chief difficulty that presented itself to the advocate of universal monadology was this; If the monads in this universe are really without any interconnection, are, to use Leibniz's own most famous expression, without any 'windows' to admit any external element—if so, how are we to explain the agreement and intercourse that we actually find in this universe between the different monads? Leibniz attempted to answer this very important fatal question by means of his hypothesis of 'pre-established harmony'. The agreement found

The hypothesis of pre-established harmony.

in this universe is the result of the harmony planned and maintained between them by the Infinite Creator. The agreement and the intercourse are not due to voluntary actions on the part of the different monads. In fact, they only *appear* to interact. Their agreement is all stage managed, the real actor and manager standing behind the scene.

The reader has in the above account a very brief outline of the Leibnizian monadology. But even from this summary account, it is obvious that such a doctrine cannot satisfy critical readers. The doctrine of pre-established harmony is only an instance of confusing theological beliefs based on faith with philosophical arguments based on reason. Besides, this is not explaining the agreement and interaction between the different monads—e. g. the body-monads and the soul monad—but rather explaining it away. It is only a modified form of Occasionalism with this difference that while in the latter, God was held to intervene every time an interaction took place, in the Leibnizian doctrine He is held to intervene only once viz when creating the monads. It is not the voluntary activity of the soul that brings about the changes in the body; it is all due to the pre-established harmony created by the Divine activity. It is thus obvious that Leibniz failed no less than the Cartesians to explain the central fact of the interaction between body and

A critical estimate of the Leibnizian monadology.

soul. Again, the Leibnizian monadology presents a picture of the universe as a vast assembly of absolutely unrelated individuals. But can such an account ever satisfy any serious thinker? Do we ever find in practical life any parallel to this? In fact, the assumption of the total absence of all intercommunication whatsoever between the different monads was one of the greatest defects of the doctrine of monadology, and brought in its train many other unfortunate consequences. Since the monads were declared to be windowless, and therefore as having no access to any knowledge from outside by means of experience, all the knowledge and ideas that a monad possessed must be held to be innate in the strict sense of the word. Such an absolute opposition to Empiricism could never be expected to outlive the attacks and criticisms levelled at it by others. Lastly, there is the same confusion in the Leibnizian monadology as in the philosophy of Descartes regarding the nature and plurality of substances. If the individual monads are themselves absolute substances, completely self-contained, how can even God, an external being, be said either to create or destroy them? If the monads are themselves Gods, can even a God create other Gods? If on the other hand, God is to have that power, which Leibniz undoubtedly granted and had no courage to refuse in the face of a fierce opposition from the prevalent Christian religion, the individual

monads can no more be described as "self-contained, absolute individuals having absolutely no relations to anything external to them", and monadology is at once overthrown. We therefore conclude on the whole that 'the philosopher of universal conciliation', in his attempt to reconcile philosophy and religion, monism and pluralism, Divine omnipotence and individual freedom, evolved only an internally inconsistent system which, notwithstanding the many advantages it possessed over the other systems, can in no way be said to have offered a satisfactory solution of the central metaphysical problems concerning the existence and nature of this universe.

The Empirical philosophy of John Locke, the Second Founder of Modern European philosophy, and the immediate philosophical predecessor of George Berkeley, marks the advent of a school of philosophical investigation that was in more respects than one just the opposite of the one propounded by his contemporary on the continent. As Spinoza's extreme Monism resulted in an equally onesided Pluralism of Leibniz, the extreme Rationalism of the latter was followed by a strong revival of Empiricism in the pages of the famous Essay on Human Uuderstanding by John Locke.[1] As has been

The Empiricism of John Locke.

[1] For a preise meaning and definition of such terms as Empiricism and Rationalism, see *infra* Bk, 1, Chap. III.

already shown above, the Leibnizian monadology advocated the Rationalistic theory in its strictest form, and refused to admit even the least possibility of the individual monads ever receiving any knowledge from without by means of experience. Having thus been declared absolutely 'windowless', the monads were compelled to have all their ideas strictly innate, and to enhance their stock of knowledge not by means of any external experience, but only by developing whatever ideas they already possessed within themselves.

Now, the philosophy of John Locke marks at once a strange and a strong contrast to the above Rationalism of the continental Monadologist. With Locke there were no *innate* ideas whatsoever, the mind accumulating all its stock of ideas from *experience and experiene alone*. The soul when it is born in this world is absolutely blank and empty, and may aptly be described as a *tabula rasa*, an empty cabinate and the like. "Let us then suppose the mind to be, as we say, white paper, void of all characters, without any ideas, how comes it to be furnished? Whence comes it by that vast store, which the busy and boundless fancy of man has painted on it with an almost endless variety? Whence has it all the materials of reason and knowledge? To this I answer in one word,

Experience is the only source of all human knowledge.

from EXPERIENCE; in that all our knowledge is founded, and from that it ultimately derives itself."[1] It is this extreme insistence on experience as the only source of all human knowledge, that has brought to Locke the title of the Father of the English philosophy of Experience.

This Experience, the only source of all human knowledge, is further distinguished by Locke into two chief sorts. Experience is either external or internal; and while some ideas are received by means of *sensations*, others enter the human mind by means of *reflection*, or introspection as the modern psychologist would style it. The mind has the experience of all external objects by means of the former source, while of its own operations by the latter one. *Sensation and reflection are thus the only two sources of human knowledge.* "The understanding seems to me not to have the least glimmering of any ideas which it doth not receive from one of these two."[2]

Two sorts of Experience: Sensation and Reflection.

The word 'idea' occurs very frequently in the phliosophical treatises of Locke, Berkeley, Hume and others. It is therefore important to know what this vital term stands for in the writings of each of these. As for Locke's use of

[1] *Essay*, II, i, 2. [2] *Essay*, II, i, 5.

the term, it was the widest of all; the term signifying to him, in his own simple words, "whatsoever is the object of the understanding when a man thinks", or in still simpler words "whatsoever it is that the mind can be employed about in thinking." [1] Berkeley later on attempted rather arbitrarily to restrict this wide use of the term only to the mentally picturable objects.[2]

Simple and Complex ideas

Locke distinguishes 'ideas' or the objects of thought into two kinds—Simple and Complex. Simple ideas are those "in the reception whereof the mind is only passive.....(and) whereof the mind cannot make one to itself, nor have any idea which does not wholly consist of them". The mind can neither make nor destroy even a single one of these 'simple' ideas. The 'complex' ideas, on the other hand, are formed by the mind itself by arbitrarily combining such simple ideas. The mind is consequently active in the formation of these ideas and not merely passive as in the former case. Instances of simple ideas are those of colour, sound, solidity, perception, pleasure, pain, power, unity and the like; while of the complex, those of substance, relation, space, time, infinity and others like these.

It is, however, his view regarding the nature and existence of the material substance which has found

[1] *Ibid* I, i, 8. [2] See, further *infra* Bk. II, Chap. V,

expression in the Essay, that has a special and important bearing upon our present study. A thing with the author of the famous Essay,

Locke's conception of the Material Substance.

is not a mere combination of its perceived qualities, as it was later on with Berkeley; it is, on the contrary, the combination of such qualities *plus* the concept of some unperceived material substratum of these qualities. "The mind being, as I have declared, furnished with a great number of the simple ideas conveyed in by the senses, as they are found in exterior things, or by reflection on its own operations, takes notice also, that a certain number of these simple ideas go constantly together; which being presumed to belong to one thing..... are called, so united in one subject, by one name; which, by inadvertency, we are apt afterward to talk of and consider as one simple idea, which indeed is a complication of many ideas together: because, as I have said, not imagining how these simple ideas can subsist by themselves, we accustom ourselves to suppose some *substratum* wherein they do subsist, and from which they do result, which therefore we call *substance*. So that if any one will examine himself concerning his notion of pure substance in general, he will find he has no other idea of it at all, but only a supposition of he knows not what support of such qualities which are capable of producing simple ideas in us; which qualities are

commonly called accidents. . . The idea, then, we have, to which we give the general name substance, being nothing but the supposed, but unknown, support of those qualities we find existing, which we imagine cannot subsist *sine re substante*, without something to support them, we call that support *substantia*, which, according to the true import of the word, is, in plain English, standing under, or upholding ".[1]

The rather unusual length of the passage quoted above from Locke's Essay is amply justified by the extreme importance that attaches to it in view of the subsequent treatment of this same problem of the existence of the unknown material substance in the philosophies of Berkeley and Hume. A careful reading of the above passage will enable the reader to grasp fairly the Lockian doctrine regarding the material substance. The concept of the material substance as the *support* of the perceived qualities owes its origin, as Locke plainly admits, to *an intellectual necessity*; and is *not based on experience*. The assumed material substance is never perceived by us; we are on the contrary, intellectually compelled to admit its existence because we cannot imagine how the perceived qualities can exist by themselves.[2] It was precisely the presence of this point, viz. the admission of the impossibility of experiencing the assumed material substance, that

1 *Essay*, II, xxiii, 1 & 2. 2 It is just this admission

Berkeley relied on for support in his famous attack on the doctrine of the unknown material substance.

Locke's views regarding some of our other ideas are also important and worthy of note. He of course claims to trace the origin of each one of our ideas from experience, but in the actual process he invariably assumes much that is not given in human experience. As for the idea of our own self, he believes that we are intuitively conscious of our own existence, and that neither can any proof be given nor is it needed to establish our existence. "Experience, then, convinces us that we have an *intuitive knowledge* of our own existence, and an internal infallible perception that we are".[1] Locke similarly traces the origin of our idea of God to another intellectual necessity. We know intuitively that 'whatever had a beginning must be produced by something else'; thence we conclude that God exists. "Thus from the consideration of ourselves, and what we infallibly find in our own constitutions, our reason leads us

Locke's doctrines of the self and God.

of the mon-empirical intellectual necessity involved in the formation of such vital concepts as that of the self and material substance, that justifies the remark of the critics that Locke's Essay is after all only an inconsistent exposition of the philosophy of Empiricism.

1 *Essay*, IV, ix, 3. For an adequate account of Locke's doctrine of the nature and existence of our own self, see, *infra* Bk III chap 1.

to the knowledge of this certain and evident truth, that *there is an eternal, most powerful, and most knowing Being*, which whether any one will please to call *God* it matters not".[1]

Locke admits the possibility of the formation of abstract general ideas; and attempts to trace even the origin of these from the simple ideas perceived by us through our senses. Such abstract general ideas, however, being only 'the creatures of the understanding' are denied the real existence that belongs to the things actually perceived by us. Berkeley later on levelled a fierce attack on this doctrine of abstract ideas as advocated by Locke.[2] As for his theory of sense-perception, Locke bears a close resemblance to Descartes. Both maintain what is known as the Representative theory of perception, according to which our senses perceive immediately not the material object itself but only our own idea of it which, however, is alleged to be an exact copy or representation of the original. What we immediately perceive on this theory is thus only the attributes of matter and not the thing itself. Locke further distinguishes–with Descartes–these material attributes into primary and secondary qualities, ascribing to the former an existence

1 *Ibid*, IV, x, 6.

2 See further Book I, chap IV.

independent of perception while denying it to the latter. [1]

We have thus summarised above the famous views held by the immediate predecessor of George Berkeley regarding those important metaphysical problems that chiefly concern us here. We had begun our historical introduction with the philosophy of Descartes, the first founder of Modern European philosophy, and have concluded it with an account of the doctrines advocated by John Locke who has been acclaimed by some as the second great founder of the same. Of all the philosophers surveyed by us, these two have a special importance in the eyes of an earnest student of the Berkeleyan philosophy. Berkeley borrowed much from both; but, not being a blind follower, he also unhesitatingly attacked them wherever he thought fit to differ from them. His attacks on Locke's material substance, on his distinction of the material qualities into primary and secondary, as well as on his doctrine of abstraction are chiefly famous and very well known to the students of philosophy. In spite of its numerous defects, however, and in spite of the several criticisms levelled at it by almost all the subsequent writers on philosophy, it will have to be

1 In connection with Locke's theory of perception and his classification of the qualities of matter, see, further Book II, chapters IV and II respectively.

acknowledged by every impartial and reasonable critic that the Essay has done a great service to the progress of philosophical speculations, by way of stimulating the thoughts of mankind; and there is no doubt that in its advocacy of free and independent thought, in its disdain of blind reverence for authority, and above all in the various interesting views expressed in it in an honest plain manner upon the numerous subtle problems touching the study of metaphysics, it stands as a landmark in the history of modern European philosophy.

Such, in brief, was the philosophy of the great English Empirical philosopher, John Locke, which ruled the field of metaphysical speculations when Berkeley entered it with a promise of a new contribution of his own. The Essay of Locke had already come in vogue among the literary circles when the youthful Immaterialist was preparing the ground for a development of his own interpretation of the principles underlying this universe. Berkeley's chief aim was to reinterpret the unphilosophical commonsense conception of material substance which was only half-heartedly modified by the author of the Essay. Locke's treatise contained two most glaring inconsistencies, which were destined to prove fatal in the long run to his half-way doctrines, that aimed at accomplishing the most difficult task of

satisfying both the commonsense man as well as the speculative philosopher. While Locke declared, in most unambiguious terms, that Experience is the *only* source of all human knowledge, he, on the other hand, admitted, with obvious inconsistency, a number of vital concepts—one of the prominent among which was that of the unperceived material substance—that were admittedly impossible of any immediate experience on our part. Secondly, Locke maintained that the primary qualities exist really in the thing without, while the secondary qualities only in our minds, though the reasons for denying an independent existence to the latter, hold, as was clearly proved later on by Berkeley, equally true in the case of the primary qualities too. It was the presence of these conspicuous inconsistencies in the Essay of his immediate predecessor, that afforded to the ingeneous Irish Youth an easy yielding ground to strike against. Berkeley's philosophy, as is apparant on a careful study, is throughout an attempt to demolish the Lockian concept of the unperceived material substratum of the ideas immediately perceived by us. Whether, however, he succeeded in this cherished aspiration of his, and whether the state of metaphysical speculations as Berkeley left it at the end of his career was in any way superior to the one which he found on the eve of his intellectual life, or whether, on the other hand, it was all the worse for

a pitiful want of a suitable substitute in place of the exploded material substratum of ideas, we have yet to see and shall be the chief object of our critical study in the pages to follow, for which the present chapter is only intended to serve as a preliminary introduction.

CHAPTER II.

THE NATURE OF REALITY.

Two main problems have been troubling philosophical thinkers of all nations and of all ages, since the very beginning of speculative thought; one, concerning the source of our knowledge, and the second, concerning the reality of our experience. With the former is connected the age-long controversy between Empiricism and Rationalism; while, with the latter, the still more time-honoured controversy between Idealism and Realism. We are here concerned immediately with this latter alone, and shall discuss it briefly in some of its aspects.

The question has again and again occured to the speculative mind of man, as to whether all that we experience is real. Is all that we perceive and have experience of real in the very form in which we experience it? Is it real in any sense, or is it a complete illusion? Is it real in essence but unreal in appearance? In all our experience there appear two elements, Matter and Spirit. Are both of these real in the same sense? Does matter really exist, or is it in essence only spirit manifested? If both are real, how are the two related? Do we perceive matter

when we have any experience of a thing? Or is it all a mere idea in our mind?

Idealism and Realism.

The words Idealism and Realism have been used in very different senses by different philosophers. But, it may on the whole be safely said that Idealism is the name given to that philosophical theory, which holds that in the ultimate sense matter possesses no real existence, the true essence of all that exists being nothing but spiritual. There are different kinds of Idealism; but this much is common to all. While some Idealists (like Berkeley) maintain that matter has absolutely no existence in any sense, the "thing" that we appear to perceive being nothing, in reality, but a cluster of ideas, others like Hegel and Schelling hold that matter *has* existence but only a relative one, all of it being ***ultimately*** and in essence nothing but spirit. It is here that Realism as a philosophical theory is opposed to Idealism. While the latter maintains unreservedly that matter does not exist, Realism holds that matter has as much real existence as spirit, and that the thing we perceive is not to be analysed into mere ideas in our mind. Realism too is of different kinds. Natural Realism is the crude common-sense theory that we directly perceive in perception the thing sensed; while, according to the Representational Realism of Locke and Descartes,

what we immediately perceive is not the actual thing itself, but only our own idea of it, which, however, is declared to be an exact copy of the original thing existing without us.

Berkeley an Idealist.

In the light of the above remarks, it will now be easily perceived that the Berkeleyan philosophy must properly be called Idealism and not Realism. Even a cursory glance at Berkeley's theory shows that what he advocates is neither the Natural nor the Representational Realism, for he maintains unreservedly that matter is absolutely non-existing, any conception of matter being to him irrelevant, repugnant and self-contradictory. What really exists is with Berkeley only psychical and spiritual in essence. Berkeley attacks in one breath both the crude theory that in perception the material thing is directly present to our senses, as well as the more philosophical theory of Locke that our ideas, which alone we immediately perceive, are copies of the external things. With great subtlety he argues that the so-called material thing is nothing but our own idea of it.

Berkeley and Spiritual Realism.

But though it is easy to see how the Berkeleyan philosophy may be styled Idealism, it is not so easy to see at first sight how it can ever be called 'Spiritual *Realism*'. In fact, on the first glance it appears

quite contradictory to call it spiritual or any kind of *Realism*. How can such a complete thorough-going Idealism like that of Berkeley ever be called *Realism* ?

But the apparent contradiction will be removed easily, when it is noted that in the phrase 'Spiritual Realism' the word Realism is not employed in the sense explained just above, as it is not here opposed to Idealism. 'Spiritual Realism' is not only not a kind of Realism as described above, but is just the opposite of it.

The words Spirtual Realism indicate the theory according to which what-so-ever is real is ultimately spiritual in essence. The exponents of this doctrine maintain boldly that the spirit is real and the real is spirit, and deny any reality to matter independent of the spirit. It is thus just the opposite of Realism or Materialism, and is more a species of Idealism, though in the phrase itself the word Realism is explicitly used. Spiritual Realism is opposed to (i) Dualism, according to which matter also has real existence by the side of spirit; (ii) Materialism, which holds that matter alone ultimately exists; and lastly, (iii) Nihilism, according to which nothing is real—neither spirit nor matter.

In this sense of the words 'Spiritual Realism', Berkeley's philosophy can certainly be called *both*

Idealism and Spiritual Realism. [1] Whatever exists is, according to Berkeley, spiritual in essence. Let us see in brief how he arrives at this conclusion. He first argues that whatever 'things' we perceive are nothing apart from the ideas, and contain nothing in them that is material. The objects of knowledge may be divided, with Berkeley, into (i) ideas and (ii) notions. Now, it is already proved that ideas contain nothing that is material, and are thus mental or spiritual in nature. Notions are universal concepts and have as their objects either (i) spirits, (ii) mental operations, or (iii) relations; all of which three again are mental or spiritual. Thus the only substance that exists is Spirit. [2]

All the objects of our experience, all the choir of heaven and furniture of earth, depend for their reality on the spirit in two ways, (i) in being perceived by it, (ii) and in being caused by it. Unless caused by some spirit, no idea can come into existence, and apart from perception by some spirit, no idea can continue to exist. Thus, according to Berkeley, the only real ground of existence

1 Cf. Fraser: " Berkeley's conception of the material world is ultimately spiritual in that it eliminates power from the things we see and touch, but retains it in mind or spirit. " *(Selections*, p. 99. footnote 5.)

2 Cf. " From what has been said it is evident there is not any other substance than SPIRIT. " (*Principles*, s. 7.)

is spirit. Fraser thus sums up Berkeley's position in this respect: "Spirit in fact is the one, finally sustaining and finally active Reality in the Universe, so far, at any rate, as the universe has any practical relation to me ".[1] And again, " we have found the distinctive principle of Berkeley's Realism in the truth, to himself evident, that the material world has its being and agency in spirit. In itself it is wholly impotent, and finally dependent for its seeming agency upon the Universal Mind ". [2] " To come to the conclusion of the whole matter ", remarks Morris, " Berkeley is always first and last convinced that the essence of reality is spiritual and that its true nature is apprehended by us in and through our insight into the activities of spirit. " [3]

Berkeleyan philosophy and Solipsism. What is Solipsism ?

Let us pass on to consider a different question. Was Berkeley a Solipsist? Now, this word has two somewhat differing senses, according as it is used either in Epistemology or in Metaphysics. As used in Epistemology or the Theory of Knowledge, the term Solipsism stands for " the doctrine that since knowing is a subjective process in the mind of an individual, what is known must always be either the self or

1 *Berkeley and Spiritual Realism*. p 27. 2 *Ibid* p. 82
3 *Locke, Berkeley and Hume*, p. 102.

some modification of the self. Or, stated negatively, the doctrine that nothing can be known except the self and its modifications or states ". (Baldwin). In metaphysics however, it connotes the doctrine according to which 'only my self exists;' in other words, that nothing but my self and its modifications has any existence in the real sense. The argument for Solipsism is thus stated by a famous philosopher of modern times: " I can not transcend experience, and experience must be my experience. From this it follows that nothing beyond my self exists for what is experience is its (the self's) states."[1] We are here concerned with the metaphysical and not the epistemological meaning of Solipsism. 'Whatever exists is ultimately either myself or its states or modifications ', is, then, the central meaning and theory of Solipsism, so far as we are here concerned.

But is complete Solipsism possible ? Can any one ever maintain a full-fledged perfect Solipsism ? According to a perfectly solipsist philosopher, reality can be attributed to nothing except his own self and the states or modifications of it. Now, can any one ever reasonably maintain that he alone exists, and that neither matter, nor other finite spirits, nor, further, the Infinite Spirit have any real existence ? Can such a radical

1 Bradley: *Appearance and Reality*, P. 248.

philosophy ever hold its ground, even if propounded, a single minute ?

The fact is, that it is very difficult to point safely to any particular philosopher as having advocated complete and consistent Solipsism. As stated above, complete Solipsism must deny existence to (i) all material objects, (ii) all other finite spirits, (iii) and lastly, the Infinite Spirit. Now, while philosophers have certainly not been wanting who reject the first and the third unambiguously, no philosopher of fame has as yet denied *openly and explicitly* the existence of other finite spirits. It is too shocking a doctrine to common sense as well as to philosophy, to deny altogether the existence of all individuals other than one's own isolated self. Such a position is at once repudiated on ethical, psychological, epistemological, as well as metaphysical grounds. Nevertheless, though there have not been completely solipsist philosophies, there have been propounded philosophical systems, which if taken consistently would no doubt tend towards Solipsism. Hume's was certainly one such. Modern critics maintain that Hume's philosophy, if consistently developed, lands us straight into the position according to which nothing exists but the states of my own consciousness. Hume of course does not *openly* maintain it. He does maintain the existence of other finite spirits

besides his own, but it has been held that he has no right on his principles to do so. [1]

Was Berkeley a Solipsist ?

Let us now examine in the light of the above discussion concerning the nature and possibility of Solipsism, whether the Berkeleyan philosophy can properly be described as Solipsism. The answer is simple. Berkeley has maintained with all the force at his command the existence of other finite spirits and (what is of still more importance) of the Infinite Spirit too. Whatever the account he gives of our knowledge of the other spirits besides our own, he never doubted their existence nor again that of the Infinite Spirit. It was the presence of these two points that saved Berkeley from landing into complete Solipsism.

While Locke believed on the one hand that we are directly conscious only of our own ideas, he yet maintained that our ideas are the *copies* of external things. He thus granted, besides the existence of the spirits, the existence of inert, unknown matter, some unknown material substratum of our ideas, something ' I know not what '. Having

1 Similarly, has it been held that the modern philosophical doctrine of the Italian philosophers Croce and Gentile, known as 'Neo-Idealism', is also open to the same charge of Solipsism. See *Introduction to Modern Philosophy* by Joad p. 63.

thus assumed the external existence of matter independent of spirits, Locke's position was miles away from Solipsism. But when Locke's Essay on Human Understanding passed through the youthful hands of Berkeley, the latter with his acute intelligence soon perceived that the assumption of the unknown inert matter could not really be maintained, it being in his opinion both irrelevant as well as unnecessary. Ideas in fact could never be *copies* of any external unperceived matter. 'An idea', said Berkeley, 'can be like nothing but an idea.' Not even the Materialist, adds Berkeley, can explain how an idea can ever be related in any way to any inert matter even supposing, *per impossibile*, that it exists.

To Locke, then, things meant a cluster of ideas *plus* the notion of some material substratum as a support to these qualities. To Berkeley, on the contrary, things no longer connoted the latter half of Locke's meaning. Was a thing then to be reduced to a *mere* cluster of ideas? It would seem that having rejected Locke's concept of Matter, Berkeley reduces things to *mere and bare ideas*. Had he, however, really done so, he would not have been very far from the position of a Solipsist. If things are mere ideas, and these ideas are *nothing but* states of my own consciousness it is obvious that whatever I think or perceive as

existing is ultimately a mode of my own consciousness. I can know only my own ideas; and the ideas are *ex hypothesi* to be nothing but the states of my own consciousness.

But Berkeley did *not* reduce things to *bare* ideas, as Hume later on attempted to do. To him, ideas were not mere ideas but ideas *as implying some external cause*, which with Berkeley was God or the Infinite Spirit, as with Locke it was the inert unknown material substance. It is just when Berkeley's philosophy is on the point of entering the cursed land of Solipsism, that the conception of Divine Existence and the Divine Origin of our ideas steps in, and saves the Berkeleyan philosophy. All the countless orderly ideas that we experience every moment of our conscious life must have some cause. Matter does not exist and ideas themselves are inert. To say that I create them would again lead us straight to Solipsism, and is also against the clearest consciousness of every man. Every one is conscious that he has not created all these ideas of mountains and rivers, this heaven and this earth. Who else, then, but the Infinite Omnipotent Divine Being can be the cause and creator of all this? Naturally, then, this Infinite Spirit or God must exist, and immediately with our arrival at this

"The Conception of God saves Berkeley's philosophy from lapsing into Solipsism"

conclusion Solipsism vanishes into thin air, and the Berkeleyan philosophy is once for all saved from that odious charge. Thus it is that the conception of God saves Berkeley's philosophy from lapsing into Solipsism.

But besides the assumption of Divine Existence, there is one more assumption, as mentioned above, that also saved the Berkeleyan philosophy from lapsing into Solipsism. It is the assumption that other finite spirits besides my own have also as much real existence as mine own. [1] These two assumptions then are the chief supports of Berkeley in his defence against any charge of Solipsism. [2]

1 It has however been maintained, that with his peculiar views concerning the identity of things perceived simultaneously by different men, any intercommunication between the different finite spirits is impossible on the principles of Berkeley, and that, therefore, Berkeley rather assumes than proves the existence of other finite spirits, and his defence against the charge of Solipsism is consequently so far weak and defective. See further, Book III, chap II.

2 It may not be out of place to mention here, that though Berkeley's philosophy is not Solipsism, it may be termed *pan-psychism*, since it states that whatever exists is ultimately psychical or mental. The essence of all 'the choir of heaven and furniture of earth' that we experience is according to Berkeley psychical or spiritual in nature.

It is some times said that Berkeley's philosophy represents the initial stage of three systems, Empiricism, Rationalism, and Theistic Idealism. We have discussed Berkeley's position in reference to the first two systems in a different chapter. As for the third, it is not a very hard thing to prove that Berkeley holds to some extent the doctrine known in philosophy as Theistic Idealism. According to him all things ultimately exist in the mind of God, and when no finite spirit is perceiving a thing it is God who continues to perceive it, unless it ceases to exist altogether. So far as a finite spirit is concerned, *for it* all things are in constant creation. *It* never preceives the *same* thing again, but only another *similar* thing. The permanence of things is guaranteed only by divine perception. For God a thing continues to be the same, though for a finite spirit it is created anew each time it perceives it. There are thus two sorts of reality or exsistence. Things or ideas have an 'archetypal and eternal' existence in the mind of God; while only an 'echtypal and natural' existence in the minds of the finite spirits. The ideas as presented in human perception are echtypes or copies of the eternal ideas in the Divine Mind.

Berkeley and Theistic Idealism

But this doctrine of Theistic Idealism as maintained by Berkeley is defective at several points.

How do we know, for instance, that the *same* idea that is presented in human perception exists archetypally in the mind of God? God's knowledge, as Berkeley himself plainly admits, is not received by way of sense. How can *our* sense-ideas, then, be *copies* of the divine ideas, when the two differ in kind and not only in degree. And besides in maintaining this another copy theory of ideas, is not Berkeley himself advocating a theory that is similar to Locke's theory of Representative Perception, and does he not thereby expose himself to an attack on the same lines on which he attacked Locke? It may thus be objected, that Berkeley can not know his 'echtypal idea' to be a *copy* of the Divine idea, since he is conscious only of the former and *never* of the latter. Suffice it to conclude here that Berkeley's doctrine of Theistic Idealism is not a fully developed consistent theory, but only a rough attempt at it or rather an 'initial stage' of it, which in his zeal for Religion and Theology, Berkeley could not but put forward as a positive supplement to his destructive criticism of the Lockian assumption of the material substance as the archetypal support of the ideas perceived immediately by us.

CHAPTER III.

THE ORIGIN OF KNOWLEDGE.

Systems in philosophy are not water-tight compartments, and it is often difficult to state precisely the particular system in which a philosopher's teachings can be exclusively included. It was specially so in the beginning of the modern period, when the doctrines of a particular philosopher often contained the germs of more than one system of philosophy. The Empiricists and the Rationalists might equally claim their descent from Descartes; while, Locke himself, though an Empiricist by profession, was a Rationalist by implication. It is much more so in the case of a philosopher like Berkeley whose philosophy is the result of a gradual development. Berkeley's philosophy as contained in his old age treatise '*Siris*' is not the same as the one propounded by the clever Youth at Trinity College. While under the zealous hands of young Berkeley everything appeared to be dissolved except the ideas whose sole existence consists in their being perceived, with the gradual growth of thought and experience and the equally gradual approach of senility, we find one rational element after another reinstated, until we get in the latest phase of Berkeley's philosophy a beautiful

Berkeley's Philosophy is a mixture of different systems.

development of the Idealistic philosophy, which itself supplies a fine criticism of his own hasty and one-sided philosophy of the early youth. While the youthful Berkeley was a complete Empiricist, the same philosopher advocated in his old age a philosophy which was as much a rationalistic system as an empirical one.

Empiricism and Rationalism.

Before we decide, however, whether Berkeley or any other philosopher is an Empiricist or a Rationalist, it is of course essential for us to have in our minds a clear idea of the meanings of these two terms. Now Empiricism as a system of philosophy is opposed to Rationalism and can best be understood in contrast with it. The distinction between these two great systems of speculation, the reader should carefully remember, turns on the view regarding the source of our knowledge. [1]

1 Five sources of knowledge:—The student will do well here to remember that throughout the entire history of philosophy five chief sources of knowledge have generally been recognised. (i) Innate ideas. Philosophers like Descartes, Leibniz and others held in somewhat different forms the view that the self of man is already in possession of some ideas before he has had any experience in this world. These 'innate' ideas, as they are called, are alleged to exist in the mind before the actual birth of the man. (ii) Sensations. The theory known in philosophy as Sensationalism holds that *all* our knowledge is entirely derived from sensations. It is in direct opposition to the former theory. Philosophers like Condillac, Hume and James Mill held closely to it. (iii) Reason. According to the theory technically called by the name of Rationalism, the main—if not necessarily the only—source of human knowledge is Reason unaided by experience. (iv) Mysticism. Spinoza, Schelling and others in Europe, and the Advaita philosophers in India maintained that we also receive knowledge by means of some mystical direct contact with the ultimate Reality. (v) Introspection. Both Locke and Berkeley mention this as an important source of our knowledge. It should not be supposed that these sources are absolutely exclusive of one another, or that each philosopher necessarily admits only one of these rejecting all the others.

The theory of Empiricism may be defined in one sentence as *the theory according to which all our knowledge is derived from experience.* All knowledge, to use a technical expression, is *a posteriori*; none innate or *a priori.*

What is experience?

But the task of defining Empiricism is not so easy as it may appear at first sight. For, what precisely are we to understand by the term *Experience*? It is one of the most important terms in philosophy and at the same time one that is most ambiguous and hence most difficult to give a precise and fully satisfactory meaning of. The term has been used by different authors in widely different senses. Philosophers like Condillac in France and

David Hume in Scotland confine it strictly to mere sensations. Empiricism in their hands is thus identical with Sensationalism. Others like Locke and Berkeley (in later life) on the other hand admit, though unconsciously, much in experience that is *not* given through sense.[1] Empiricism in their hands, is only a partial Sensationalism. Either, then, they are not consistent empiricists, or Empiricism is to them a mixed Rationalism. It all depends on the sense we give to the word 'experience'.

The modern view.

But the tendency in modern times is distinctly against restricting the term experience to mere sense-knowledge. Thus James Ward, the well-known English psychologist, begins his treatise by observing that while the keynote of the older (i. e. Aristotelian) psychology was *life* and that of the mediaeval (i. e. Cartesian) was *mind*, that of the modern (i. e. Kantian and post-Kantian) psychology is *experience*. Now, Ward is certainly not a man who would ever even through mistake attempt to found an entire science of psychology upon mere sense-knowledge. The following observation of Andrew Seth, that eminent and learned critic of the Scottish philosophy, is as clear on this point as can be desired. "We ought to have no

1. See below.

hesitation" he remarks, "in proclaiming that we are all Experientialists, all Evolutionists. The point on which issue should be joined is the identification of Experience with mere sense. If we prove that this is not so, and that, on the contrary, mere sense is an abstraction impossible *in rerum natura*, Experientialism is at once shorn of all its supposed terrors."[1]

We have thus discussed briefly the nature of Empiricism, and have seen the different meanings attached to it by the different philosophers, as well as the one that derives support from the modern consensus of opinion. We may end this brief discussion regarding the nature of Empiricism, by concluding that, according to the modern and widely accepted view, it is a philosophical theory which maintains that all our knowledge is derived from experience, signifying by experience not mere sense-experience, but the combined product of sense and reason.[2] Let us now turn to consider, in the light of the preceeding remarks, whether Berkeley's philosophy may properly be included under Empiricism or under Rationalism.

1. *Scottish Philosophy*, p. 148.

2. A brief historical study of the growth of Empiricism and Rationalism and their termination in the critical philosophy of Kant will be much useful to the reader at this place.

(Continued on next page)

Berkeley's earliest philosophy presents, no doubt, a dangerous vicinity to a complete Empiricism. "If it were not for the senses," he writes in the *Commonplace Book*, "mind could have no knowledge, no thought at all". Nay, Berkeley goes even further than this and advances as far as Hume later on did regarding the problem of the nature of the mind. What is a 'mind' apart from the ideas that alone are actually perceived? Berkeley's earliest answer to this all-important question anticipates literally the celebrated answer

Berkeley's earliest philosophy was an empirical one.

Scientific discoveries in various different branches at the close of the mediaeval period and the beginning of the modern one resulted in a rapid and astonishing development of all the sciences. Mathematics, physics, chemistry, medicine, all received great nourishment in this period. But mathematics, being essential to all the other sciences, naturally received the greatest attention. Mathematicians like Galileo and Descartes did much to develop the study of this important science. Now, this development of the science of mathematics had a great influence on the course of philosophical thought. The belief soon gained ground that just as mathematics could start with a few fundamental axioms and develop from these the entire science of numbers by means of the reason alone without any help from experience,— philosophy might also do the same and by starting from some few fundamental maxims reach the whole ocean of human knowledge *by means of reason alone without any help of experience*. Descartes started this school and was soon

of Hume, and differs diametrically from his own later answer. "Mind" says he, "is a congeries of perceptions. Take away perceptions and you take away the mind. Put the perceptions and you put the mind." There is not much difference between the position that Berkeley takes here and that of a complete Empiricist. "For Berkeley" remarks Dr Johnston, "the only real philosophy is empirical". Berkeley's method in the investigation of philosophical problems is the same as Locke's empirical method of introspection. Indeed, the very fact that Hume's completely empirical

succeeded by Spinoza, Leibniz and a host of others. Their system was called Rationalism---also known as Dogmatism. Wolff was the last pre--Kantian representative of this school. On the other hand, in England was started the Empiricist school by John Locke, who was almost immediately followed by Berkeley and Hume. While the Rationalists argued on the Continent that our knowledge is derived from reason alone, these British philosophers maintained on the contrary that experience is the only source of our knowledge. Now, Kant with his great acumen at once perceived the truth that both strict Empiricism as well as strict Rationalism---each by itself is a complete failure and can not account for the whole of human knowledge. Kant is thus Hume and Wolff combined, and in Kant's "critical philosophy" we have a nice combination of the two great systems of Empiricism and Rationalism, each shorn of its errors and exaggerated claims and accepted only in their truths. Kant accordingly held that while the *matter* of our sensations is derived from experience, the *form* is the product of pure reason.

philosophy is considered by some as only a further development of Berkeley's philosophy, amply proves the fact that the latter's writings contained in themselves the germs of the empirical philosophy that were afterwards to startle the whole philosophical world in their developed form.

Later development of his philosophy shows strong tendencies towards Rationalism.

But though his philosophy strongly contained in itself the germs of the future full grown Empiricism of Hume and Mill, Berkeley himself can not, on a comprehensive view of his philosophical treatises be regarded as a complete Empiricist.[1] Even in his earlier writings he assumed the axiom of causality which on strict empirical grounds one can not do. It is the later development of his philosophy, however, that is of the utmost importance in this connection. While all objects of knowledge and existence were confined previously to 'ideas' (which included only sensuous percepts and mental images), Berkeley gradually retraced his steps with the advance in years, and admitted that while the self, other spirits, relations, mental operations and suchwise things exist, our knowledge of these,

1. It should be carefully borne in mind that whenever in this chapter the Berkeleyan philosophy is denied the title of complete Empiricism, the word 'Empiricism' is used in its narrow traditional sense.

nevertheless is *not* by way of *ideas*. The work of reason in experience is at first indistinctly and later on in plainest words admitted. The mind is no more 'a congeries of perceptions'. Besides the ideas or perceptions, some subject which is not itself an idea must needs be postulated. "*I myself* am not my ideas, but some what else, a thinking, active principle that perceives, knows, wills, and operates about ideas". But if all sense-experience thus presupposes the subject or self, is not the self itself known independently of it, that is, in other words, by reason or the rational faculty in man? It is obvious that with such an admission strict Empiricism is compromised.

It is not, however, the self alone that is known by reason; there are, besides, other finite spirits, the Infinite spirit, relations, mental operations, none of which can ever be known by sense. Berkeley admits all this in his later philosophy. It is interesting to note his admission regarding the knowledge of the relations and the element of judgment involved in all perception. "Sense and experience acquaint us with the course and analogy of appearances or natural effects. Thought, reason intellect, introduce us into the knowledge of their causes." The causal relation is never an object of sense experience. "Strictly" he maintains in *Siris*, "the sense knows nothing. We perceive indeed

sounds by hearing, and characters by sight. But we are not therefore said to understand them. After the same manners, the phenomena of nature are alike visible to all; but all have not alike learned the connection of natural things, or understand what they signify." The senses may perceive, but cannot judge. Formerly, Berkeley had attempted to include the element of judgment also in sense perception. It is now alloted exclusively to reason, as may be seen from the passages quoted above.[1] Sense and Reason are not however, left as disconnected units; but are held to work in co-operation. Berkeley points out this fact nicely in the following passage: "The perceptions of sense are gross..... Sense supplies images to memory. These become subjects for fancy to work upon. Reason considers and judges of the imaginations. And these acts of reason become new objects of the understanding. In this scale each lower faculty is a step that leads to one above it." Berkeley's earlier attitude towards the objects of science is thus critically summed up by Morris: "He seeks to discredit rationalism and materialism by showing that science deals only with the sensible.... that its fundamental concepts are

1. cf. besides, the following passage from '*Vindication of Divine Visual Language*':"To *perceive* is one thing; *to judge* is another. So likewise, to be suggested is one thing, and to be inferred another. Things are suggested and perceived by Sense. We make judgment and inference by the understanding". (*Selections*, p. 276).

derived from the senses."[1] Contrast with this Berkeley's position in later life, which may best be described in his own words: "The principles of science are neither objects of sense nor imgination; and that intellect and reason are alone the sure guides to truth ".[2] "With this admission" remarks Morris, "he really abandons empiricism," as he "ultimately admits that even scientific knowledge depends on notions, that is, on our apprehension of mind, which is not derived from the senses ".[3]

Berkeley was never satisfied with mere phenomenal causality, and strongly held the belief that a spirit alone can be the true cause. What the 'mechanical' philosopher investigating the physical sciences does is not to establish 'causes', but only the rules or modes of operation. "In strict truth" he maintains "all agents are incorporeal, and as such are not properly of physical consideration .....The mechanical philosopher inquires properly concerning the rules or modes of operation alone, and not concerning the cause; for as much as nothing mechanical is or really can be a cause." All changes and events in this world, therefore, point to some intelligent cause that is itself beyond the phenomenal series of space and time. " Philosophy, with Berkeley," observes Fraser, "ever turns its eye

1, "*Locke, Berkeley and Hume* " p. 102
2. "*Siris*," iii, 249. 3. *Op. cit* p. 102.

towards the hyper-phenomenal reality." Berkeley is never satisfied with the perishing transient phenomena presented in this world by our senses. The dissatisfaction is specially expressed in plain words in the '*Siris*' where he constantly points to the Infinite Spirit as the real cause and ground of all our experience, and admits that this One Infinite Spirit can be known only by the Reason or Intellect. The Deity, he says, "is rather the object of intellectual knowledge than even of the discursive faculty, not to mention the sensitive."

Berkeley's philosophy has thus two different aspects, and leads, when each individual aspect is developed by itself, to two quite different systems of philosophical speculation. And therefore, as said above, if the word Empiricism is taken in its narrower traditional sense, Berkeley's philosophy is not a consistent Empiricism. Though in the vigour of his youth Berkeley had attempted to propound a pure Sensationalism, he had to admit in the sober moments of his later life that much—nay, the most important part of our knowledge is not derived from 'ideas'. [1] Thus in at least four important points Berkeley's later philosophy is faithless to the Sensationalism of his early youth. He admits that we

Berkeley in fact anticipates Kant

1. In Berkeley whatever is not derived from ideas can never be derived from sensations.

have no ideas [1] but *notions* of (i) our own self; (ii) other finite selves or spirits; (iii) the Infinite Spirit; (iv) and lastly, all relations including mental operations [2]. Now to say that they are notions, in the sense in which Berkeley uses the word, is just to admit that our knowledge of these is *not* derived from sense-experience. But, every fact of experience, every piece of our knowledge, every idea that we have, involves countless relations. Berkeley taken strictly will thus lead to the famous Kantian conclusion that every fact of our experience contains one *a priori* and one *a posteriori* element.

Out of these two quite different aspects of Berkeley's philosophy, Hume considered only the negative one, disregarding its positive and more important aspect, and landed in consquence into a complete sensationalism, which regarded as a philosophical explanation of this universe of experience and knowledge proved a grand failure. If we were to study carefully the later development of Berkeley's philosophy, however, and in particular, his admission of the essential factor of

Two different developments of the Berkeleyan philosophy

1. Hence the validity of Reid's clever criticism that "While in Locke's system we have no knowledge where we have no ideas, in Berkeley's the most important objects are known without ideas"

2. See *Principles*, S. 144.

reason in all experience, as well as his view that this entire universe is ultimately grounded in the Infinite Spirit, it will lead us, as Seth rightly points out, direct to Kant and Hegel, dropping in the way Hume and Mill. Berkeley himself, of course, was unconscious of either development of his philosophical writings, and therefore, though his philosophy contained the germs both of Empiricism and Rationalism, he himself can not be adequately described either as a complete empiricist [1] or a complete rationalist. This very fact is more accurately described, when it is remarked that the philosophy of Berkeley represents the initial stage of Empiricism as well as Rationalism.

1. It is true that if we take the wider and more modern meaning of the word 'Empiricism', Berkeley's later philosophy has a much greater claim to this title than when the traditional meaning is taken into consideration. But it should be remembered that even then there is a considerable difference between the modern Empiricism or 'Experientialism' as it is sometimes called, and the philosophy of Berkeley. At one place in the '*Siris*' Berkeley states his view in the following words: "Some, perhaps, may think the truth to be this:—that there are properly no *ideas*, or passive objects, in the mind but what were derived from sense; but that there are also besides these her own acts or operations, such as *notions*." (*Siris* S. 308). Now, modern opinion may not be willing to assign even the reception of the external objects of our experience entirely to the sense.

CHAPTER IV.

THE DOCTRINE OF ABSTRACT IDEAS.

It is not a little interesting to note that as Locke's *Essay* begins with his celebrated attack on the Leibnizian doctrine of 'innate ideas', the philosophy of Berkeley begins with an equally famous polemy against Locke's own doctrine of 'abstract ideas'; and further-what is still more interesting and curious to note-that both have been accused of having committed the fallacy of *Ignoratio Elenchi* in their respective criticisms. With Locke's own criticism of innate ideas we are not concerned here; but we shall deal here in some detail with Berkeley's criticism of the doctrine of abstract ideas and shall discuss in the sequel whether the charge of having committed *Ignoratio Elenchi* can be maintained with validity against that polemy of Berkeley.

Locke thus states the importance of general names or words (which are the result of abstraction as shown below) in language. Firstly, "that every particular thing should have a name for itself is impossible and would be useless if it were possible." Is it possible to give a distinctive name to every man we meet with, every tree we see, every page of a book we read and

Lock's arguments in support of the doctrine of abstraction.

so on ? This proves that the use of general names is inevitable in language.

But secondly, supposing it were possible, " a distinct name for every particular thing (is) not fitted for enlargement of knowledge,. . . . . which though founded in particular things enlarges itself by general views; to which things reduced into sorts, under general names, are properly subservient. "[1] The importance of general words or names in human language in the eyes of Locke may be clearly seen when we remember that Locke regards the faculty of abstraction (i. e. the faculty of forming general ideas) as the *differentia* between man and brute; it being considered to be the sole privilege of human beings to abstract and form general ideas.

Having thus described the necessity and importance of general words in human language, Locke next turns to the question of the formation of general words, and gives here his most celebrated answer. "Words become general by being made the signs of general ideas; and ideas become general by separating from them the circumstances of time and place, and any other ideas that may determine them to this or that particular existence. By this way of abstraction they are made capable of representing more ideas than one."[2]

1 *Essay* III, iii. 4. 2. *Ibid* III, iii 6.

In abstraction, then, nothing new is added; only the detailed circumstances that tie any idea to a particular existence in the series of time and place are removed, nothing but a general abstract idea being thus left behind. Locke illustrates this from instances of the formation of the general ideas like man, horse, etc. in the mind of the child. The child has at first only the particular ideas of his father, mother, and other acquaintances. Gradually it notes the similarity between these particular ideas, and abstracts the points of similarity (discarding those of difference) and ties them, as it were, in one new complex idea, then called the general idea of 'man'. This, according to Locke, is the true account of the formation of general ideas. " For let any one reflect, and tell me wherein his idea of ' man ' differs from that of ' Peter ' and ' Paul ' or his idea of ' horses ' from that of ' Bucephalus ' but in the leaving out something that is peculiar to each individual, and retaining so much of those particular complex ideas of several particular existences as they are found to agree in ?"[1] Thus the ' general ' idea of man will include the idea of height but not that of tall or low or any particular height; the idea of colour but of no particular colour; the ideas of a shape and a size but of no particular shape and size and so on ! The ' general ' idea of a triangle " must be neither oblique nor rectangular, neither equilateral,

1. *Ibid* III, iii, 9.

equicrural, nor scalene, but all and none of these at once."

Such is, in brief, Locke's famous theory of abstraction, made more famous by Berkeley's polemy against it. Berkeley opposes the theory *in toto* and considers its repudiation so important that he assigns to it a place in the forefront of his philosophy. He opposes on various grounds Locke's arguments in support of the necessity as well as the possibility of general ideas. But his argument against the very possibility of general abstract ideas is chiefly psychological, and is based on a direct appeal to every one's own introspective experience.

Berkeley's criticism of Locke.

To understand fully the Berkeleyan criticism of abstraction, we must first clear in some details the ground underlying that criticism. It is important to note here that one of the chief points of criticism advanced by Berkeley in this connection is that the phrase 'abstract general idea' is self-contradictory in itself; for, *every idea is essentially (rather ex hypothesi) particular*, and hence the term 'general idea' would mean a 'universal particular idea', which is plainly a contradiction in terms. Now, this gives us the proper clue to the entire Berkeleyan criticism of the doctrine of abstraction.

Ideas in Berkeley's philosophy

With Berkeley every idea is *ex hypothesi* particular and concrete, because *to him, every idea must be mentally picturable.* Berkeley restricts the term 'idea' only to those objects of thought that can be represented in mental images, or to speak more accurately, he confines-in the words of Fraser—the term 'idea' to 'individual percepts of sense, and images of sensuous imagination.'

But with such an arbitrary restriction of the term 'idea' which was previously used by Locke and others as identical with the entire field of thought and knowledge, a serious question arises at once. Are all the objects of thought mentally picturable? Are all of them concrete and particular? Are there no universal elements in our knowledge?

Now, two classes of possible objects of human knowledge at once raise their heads as soon as this question is asked. Our knowledge is certainly *not all* of concrete and particular things. There are therefore at least two kinds of exceptions that we must here consider before we proceed any further.

Under the first sort, we shall comprise those things (that is, objects of thought and knowledge) which are by nature such that it is ever impossible to mentally picture them. Their very nature excludes any such operation. Such, for example, are the

self, other spirits, and the relations. Who can ever pretend to represent to his mind in the form of a mental picture his own self or other spirits or relations ? Direct sense-perception is of course out of question. There can then be no 'ideas' of these in the Berkeleyan sense.

The second class of exceptions differs a little from this in as much as these things can no doubt be perceived or mentally represented. But *sometimes* they are used in such a peculiar manner that, they *as used in that manner* cannot actually be perceived or mentally represented by us. Such, for example, is the case when the idea of a triangle is used in a mathematical demonstration to establish certain truths which are true of all triangles whatsoever. Now, the triangle as actually drawn on a paper must be either equilateral, or scalene, and so on. But *while used in that proof* it is *considered* only in some one of its aspects (which it has in common with others), while all the other qualities which go to tie it down to its own particular existence, are *for the time being* neglected. But the idea of the triangle as thus shorn of all its particularities and considered only in some of its aspects abstracted from all the rest, does not as such actually exist and hence can neither be perceived by sense nor represented in fancy. It cannot therefore on Berkeley's principles, be called an 'idea', though Locke

certainly calls it so. Naturally the question again arises here, as in the previous case: what is this if not an idea ? Or is it nothing but a senseless jargon devoid of all meaning ?

Now, regarding the first class of exceptions there was a time when Berkeley was inclined to deny any existence to these; when, i. e. he too, as Hume did years after, attempted to analyse the self into a mere congeries of ideas, and denied relations altogether. But fortunately he soon perceived the dangerous inadequacy of that position and so could not permanently rest there. He therefore returned back from his former position in which he had denied all knowledge of the self as apart from the ideas, and of the relations, to one in which he admitted that we do have *some* knowledge regarding these though it is certainly not by way of 'ideas'. He thus admitted in effect that the self, spirits, as well as the universal relations, *are* certainly objects of knowledge, though they cannot be called 'ideas'. He proposed to apply the name 'notions' to these, to which Locke of course would have still continued to apply the name 'ideas'.

Berkeley's treatment of Universals.

As for the second, Berkeley was conscious from the very first that universality in this sense is quite essential to knowledge as a whole, and to sciences like mathematics in particular. But true to his principles, he refused to admit that any

'*abstract* idea' was employed here, and maintained that the idea used was undoubtedly a particular one, but only accompanied by the consciousness of a certain symbolical *relation* towards the other ideas resembling it.[1] But Berkeley unfortunately failed to see that even on his own explanation the particular idea used can no more remain particular. As Green pointed out, such consciousness of symbolical relation attached to a particular idea cannot ultimately fail to enter into the significance of that idea, and with such consciousness of a symbolical relation enters unmistakably the element of universality too. Or, as Dr. Johnston concludes, a sign "is fitted to fulfill the functions of universality, because it is not merely a particular which calls up by association other bare particulars, but is already in virtue of the qualities it connotes universal in meaning or intension."[2]

The real ground underlying Berkeley's polemy against Locke.

Berkeley thus admits himself what he denies to Locke, only employing a terminology slightly different from the one used by the latter. While he denies that we can have *ideas* of universal relations, he admits at the same time that we can have *notions* of them; and while he denies explicitly that the triangle used in the geometrical demonstration is an '*abstract* idea', he offers an explanation which *implicitly* admits the same. Berkeley and Locke thus differ mainly in terminology and not so much in their real views. ***The real ground of Berkeley's attack on Locke's 'abstract idea' is, then, his limitation of the word 'idea' to what can be actually perceived or mentally represented.*** A distinguished student of Berkeley and Locke thus expresses the conclusion we have arrived at. "The limitation of the term 'idea' to what is imaginable is at the root of Berkeley's rejection of Locke's abstract ideas; which, however, he accepts under another name, after clearly demonstrating that they can not be formed in the sensuous imagination."[1]

Having thus examined in details the real ground underlying Berkeley's attack on Locke's abstract ideas, the actual criticism itself is quite an easy thing to grasp. Berkeley appeals to every man's experience to see whether he can form in his mind a *mental picture* of what Locke calls a general abstract idea. Berkeley easily concludes--and *so far* he is right—that this is impossible; for Locke's 'abstract idea' is *ex hypothesi* stripped of all particularities, and cannot therefore be represented in concrete mental images. On psychological grounds, then, Berkeley concludes that an 'abstract idea' is

1. See Berkeley's *Introduction to the Principles*, S. 15, 16.

2. *Development of Berkeley's Philosophy* p. 138.

1. Locke's *Essay*, Clarendon Press Edition. Vol. II, p. 17, f. n. 2.

an impossibility. But it should be noted that Berkeley's real proof and ground is the '*a priori*' one, viz. that while Locke's 'abstract idea' is shorn of all particularities, an 'idea' on Berkeley's principles is essentially particular, the natural result of these two propositions taken together being that an 'abstract idea' in the Berkeleyan sense is an absolute impossibility.

The very possibility of abstract ideas being thus denied, Locke's arguments in favour of the importance and necessity of the doctrine of abstraction naturally melt into nothingness in the hands of Berkeley. He affirms that not abstraction but imagination is the *differentia* between man and brute, because brutes cannot imagine and abstraction is impossible even for human beings; and as may well be expected he denies in addition that abstraction in any way furthers knowledge, or develops language.

Is Berkeley's attack on Locke's doctrine of abstract ideas an instance of *Ignoratio Elenchi* ?

I now turn to a charge that is sometimes brought against the Berkeleyan polemy. It is charged by some that Berkeley has committed in his attack against Locke's doctrine of abstract ideas the fallacy of *Ignoratio Elenchi*. I had decided to treat this in the sequel. But I am not sure whether the answer has not been already hinted at in the above. Berkeley no doubt proved that we can

form no *mental pictures* of abstract ideas. But did Locke affirm that we can do so ? There is no doubt that Locke's language in this connection is vague. But eminent critics like Fraser, Pringgle-pattison and others agree that to attribute to Locke the view that abstract ideas can be mentally represented is to misinterpret him. So that in advancing the psychological argument, in appealing to the introspection of the reader to attempt to form a mental picture of Locke's abstract ideas, in fine, in all his lengthy attack on Locke, Berkeley undoubtedly *went besides the point* and thus can fairly be charged with having committed the fallacy of *Ignoratio Elenchi*. He first gives to the word 'idea' a restricted meaning, which Locke never gave, and then conveniently argues that Locke's abstract ideas are impossible. The fact, as has been well pointed out,[1] is that the formation of abstract ideas is beyond question and to attack it on the lines of Berkeley is bootless.[2] "Berkeley's criticism"

1. Morris: *Locke, Berkeley and Hume*, p. 72

2. It is interesting to note that Berkeley himself admitted in his later life the possibility of abstract ideas which he had so vehemently attacked in his youthful treatises. His acceptance of the 'notions'—by which term he signifies those objects of knowledge that are neither sensuous percepts nor mental images—is one relevant instance in this connection. The second is his reverential treatment of the 'Divine Ideas' in his old-age treatise *Siris*, which, as he himself admits are the most abstract ideas of all. It is true

says Fraser, "is due to misunderstanding. (Cf. Locke's Essay Bk III, iii, 6; & IV, viii, 9). Locke does not, like Berkeley, confine 'idea' to individual percepts of sense and images of sensuous imagination, but includes individualisable concepts."[1] And again,"Our inability to imagine what we are able, in these processes, to have an *abstract notion* of, was afterwards shown conclusively by Berkeley, *who did not thereby prove that we can not form what Locke means by an abstract idea.* He only proved that abstract ideas are not sensuous imaginations, and that our power of forming them implies possession of higher faculties than the one of sense".[2] (Last italics mine.)[3]

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that he employs the word *idea* in the *Siris* in a different sense than in the *Principles*; but the point is that he admits therein in plainest words the existence of such objects of thought as are the results of abstraction, and are neither immediately perceived by the senses nor mentally pictured by the imagination. "The most refined human intellect" he writes, "exerted to its utmost reach, can only seize some imperfect glimpses of the Divine Ideas--abstracted from all things corporeal, sensible, and imaginable." (*Siris*, s. 337)

1. *Locke's Essay on Human Understanding*, edited by Fraser. Clarendon Press Edition, Vol I, p. 207, footnote 2.

2. *Ibid*, Vol II p. 18, footnote 3.

3. Dr Johnston in his excellent book *Development of Berkeley's Philosophy* maintains, however, that Berkeley's

criticism of Locke is a sound one and that the charge of *Ignoratio Elenchi* can not be brought against it. A detailed criticism of Johnston's arguments will be found in one of the appendices. I may mention here, in addition, that besides the high authority of Fraser and others, Prof. Gibson whose recent work *Locke's Theory of Knowledge* is recognised as the standard authority on Locke, also supports the view taken in this book.

BOOK II.

THE PROBLEM OF MATTER.

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CHAPTER I.

THE EXISTENCE OF THINGS.

The problem of matter is essentially a problem of the 'philosopher'. To the ordinary man any question regarding the independent external existence of the things of every-day sense experience would at once sound quite absurd. When he perceives a chair under himself, the commonsense man never doubts the external existence of the chair independent of any perception on his part. He has a clear distinction in his own mind between the external things of actual sense-experience and those internal airy products of empty imagination, that come into being the moment the mind wishes to have them. While the latter are private to and dependent upon the perception of each particular individual, and may in truth be said to exist 'in the mind', the latter are quite the contrary of these. It is the philosopher, however,—that peculiar 'unpractical' example of the speculative mind—who aiming to analyse everything that he perceives—whether apparantly beautiful or otherwise—in order to reach the ultimate truth lying at the bottom of each experience, 'murders to dissect',

and who, not minding the unpleasant sceptical state into which his sophistical reasonings would throw the simple undisturbed minds of the ordinary folk, attempts to raise doubts regarding the most cherished and accepted beliefs of the ordinary life. He boldly raises and bravely discusses questions that never occur to the ordinary mind, and where the latter perceives nothing but a sense-experience of the simplest kind, he sees a multiplicity of factors operating and producing the particular experience in co-operation.

Berkeley's views on the existence of matter are quite famous for their revolutionary tendencies, and are often summarily expressed in his famous characteristic formula that 'the *esse* of every object of sense-perception is its ***percipi***'.[1] Matter, as understood in the common parlance, has in fact no existence for Berkeley, every object of our sense-perception being to him essentially nothing but a cluster of ideas without any the least material element in them. Having thus reduced all objects of sense-perception to ideas in the percipient mind, it is only a step further for Berkeley to conclude that consequently none of these—so called material—objects

Esse is Percipi

1. For a detailed exposition of this formula, vide *infra* Book IV, Chapter I.

have any existence independent of their being perceived by a spirit.

Berkeley offers in support of his revolutionary conclusion many ingeneous and plausible arguments. We shall first briefly ennumerate these and then turn to a critical examination of them. For a better understanding of these arguments of Berkeley, we shall divide them in two parts—positive and negative arguments, grouping under the former class those arguments that he advances in support and defence of his own contention, while under the latter those in which he is mainly engaged in criticising the opposite view.

Before entering upon the consideration of Berkeley's arguments for Immaterialism, however, it will be well for us to pause here a little and carefully gather in our mind the exact conclusion in support of which all these labours have been undertaken by our heroic author. The reader should carefully bear in mind that Berkeley, at least as he claims it, never intends to deny the existence of whatever is actually perceived by the senses. What he takes objection to is only the popular conception of the nature of what is perceived, and the common-sense belief in the survival of a thing even when it is not being perceived. He does never doubt the actual existence of the chair that he is perceiving at

Berkeley's Sense-Realism

any given moment; but he would never agree to the belief in the continued existence of the chair apart from and independent of sense-perception. Berkeley's statements to the effect that he never doubts the reality of whatever is immediately perceived are as clear as they could possibly be. "By the principles premised" he boasts while answering an objection "we are not deprived of any one thing in nature.....whatever we see, feel, hear or anywise conceive or understand, remains as secure as ever, and is as real as ever."[1] And again, "That the things I see with my eyes and touch with my hands do exist, really exist, I make not the least question";[2] "That what I see, hear, and feel *doth exist*, that is to say, is perceived by me, I no more doubt than I do of my own being."[3] What is it then that he does not admit in the popular conception? Here is Berkeley's answer to this question. "But I do not see how the testimony of *sense* can be alleged as a proof for the existence of anything which is *not perceived by sense*;"[4] or in still stronger words, "As to what is said of *the absolute existence of unthinking things without any relation to their being perceived*, that is to me perfectly unintelligible."[5] These and the like passages will convey to the reader's mind a fair idea of Berkeley's real position regarding the existence and nature of the objects of

1. *Principles*, s. 4. 2. *Ibid*, s. 35. 3. *Ibid*, s. 40.
4. *Ibid*, s. 40. 5. *Ibid*, s. 3.

our sense-perception, and will clearly bring out the meaning of those who describe the philosophy of Berkeley as a kind of *sense-realism*.[1]

1. It is of extreme interest, especially to the Indian reader, to compare at this place the Idealism advocated by Berkeley in the eighteenth century, with that of the Indian Bauddha philosophers who propounded their doctrines centuries before him. The reader will no doubt be struck with considerable wonder and delight to find a great similarity between the two systems in spite of a big hiatus of centuries between them. A matter of still greater interest and pride to the Indian reader, however, is that these idealistic arguments have already been repudiated satisfactorily and ingeneously by a number of Indian philosophers, prominent among them being the great scholar Shankaracharya, who also lived centuries before the modern critics of Berkeley. For an exhaustive account of the Bauddha view and its criticism by Shankracharya, the reader is referred to "*Brahma-Sutras* (also known as the *Vedant-Sutras*) *with Shankaracharya's commentary*" II, ii, 28-33. I shall, of course, mention here only a few points of comparison between the two systems, and shall add besides some few instances of the Shankaracharyan criticism.

With the above passages expressing the sense-realism of Berkeley, compare the following passage enunciating the central doctrine of the Bauddha Idealists, called in Sanskrit, the *Vidnyanavadins*."

"ननु नाहमेवं ब्रवीमि न कंचिदर्थमुपलभ इति। किंतूपलब्धिव्यतिरिक्तं नोपलभ इति ब्रवीमि।"

(*Brahma-Sutras etc.* II, ii, 28), which, rendered in simple English, would mean "I do not say that I experience

Turn we now to the consideration of the arguments proper advanced by Berkeley in support of his revolutionary tenet regarding the existence of the material things in this universe. One of the most central and vital of these may best be stated in his own words, wherein he has nicely summarised his new point of view. "What are the forementioned objects of sense" writes our author, referring to the objects of sense-perception, "but the things we perceive by sense? And what do we perceive besides our own ideas or sensations? And is it not plainly repugnant that any one of *these*, or any combination of them, should exist unperceived?"[1] Even a careless glance at the above passage will bring out the fact that there are three broad steps that lead to the Berkeleyan conclusion. Firstly, that whatever we perceive are sensible things; secondly, that these sensible things perceived by us are nothing besides our ideas or sensations; and lastly, that none of such ideas can have any existence independent of sense-perception.

Berkeley's arguments against Matter.

But the ordinary commonsense man might at once put in an obvious objection at this place.

no object at all, but only that I experience none apart from perception." What a close resemblance, and yet what a difference of centuries!

1. *Principles*, s. 4.

How can any one ever declare, he would ask, the thing and the idea to be the same? The thing is the cause of the idea, and must in consequence be at least numerically different from its effect. Berkeley's answer is simple. Two things can be distinguished from one another only if you have the experience of the one apart from the other at least on some occasions. But do you ever have any experience of a thing apart from its sensation or idea? What reason can therefore induce us to believe that these are two different entities and not rather one and the same thing? "Hence as it is impossible for me to see or feel anything without an actual sensation of that thing, so is it impossible for me to conceive in my thoughts any sensible thing or object distinct from the sensation or perception of it. In truth the object and the sensation are the same thing and cannot therefore be abstracted from each other."[1]

The object and its sensation identified.

1. *Principles*, s. 5. Compare the analogous argument of the Bauddha:—

"अपि च सहोपलंभ नियमादभेदो विषयविज्ञानयोरापतति। नह्यनयोरेकस्यानुपलंभेऽन्यस्योपलंभोऽस्ति। नचैतत्स्वभावविवेके युक्तं। प्रतिबंधकारणाभावात्। तस्मादप्यर्थाभावः॥"

(*Brahma-Sutras etc.* II, ii, 28). ("The perception and its object are one and the same for one more reason, viz, the fact of the simultaneous experience of both on our

It should be carefully borne in mind by the reader throughout our discussion in this chapter, that Berkeley always takes his stand on the psychological argument from introspection. On several occasions in his *Principles* he asks his reader to let all verbal arguments apart, and only examine with honest care the actual process that goes on in his own mind. He maintains on introspective grounds that so far as his own mind is concerned—and he believes strongly that the experience of the entire mankind will agree with him in this respect—he never perceives anything beyond a collection of certain sensible qualities by themselves, and is never aware of any consciousness of a *material substance* in an act of external perception.

The argument from dreams.

An important argument that Berkeley with his great acumen could never have failed to adduce in his own support is an analogy of the living experience with the dream life. We believe in dreams, without the least glimmer of doubt, that we actually perceive innumerable material objects existing

part. We never experience the one in the absence of the other. Now, this should not have happened had the two been really different, there being nothing to prevent (the presence of the one in the absence of the other). Therefore also the unreality of external objects— apart from perception."

without us, while on waking we are sorry to find that there are none. Does not this afford a strong ground to doubt—nay, as Berkeley himself would have it, to deny—the validity of our belief in the external independent existence of the 'material' objects perceived by us even in our waking life? "I say it is granted on all hands—and what happens in dreams, frenzies, and the like, puts it beyond dispute—that it is possible we might be affected with all the ideas we have now, though there were no bodies existing without, resembling them. Hence, it is evident the supposition of external bodies is not necessary for the producing of our ideas; since it is granted they are produced sometimes, and might possibly be produced always in the same order we see them in at present, without their concurrence."[1]

1. *Principles*, s. 15. Compare the Bauddha statement of this very argument:--

"स्वप्नादिवच्चेदं द्रष्टव्यम्। यथाहि स्वप्नमायामरीच्युदकगंधर्वनगरादिप्रत्यया विनैव बाह्येन अर्थेन प्राह्य ग्राह्यकाकारा भवन्ति। एवं जागरितगोचराअपि स्तंभादिप्रत्यया भवितुमर्हन्तीत्यवगम्यते। प्रत्ययत्वाविशेषात्।"

(*Brahma-Sutras etc.* II, ii, 28). ("Besides, this perception of external objects in the waking state should be regarded as analogical to the perception in dreams etc. As the perceptions in dreams, mirage, jugglery and the like, appear in the forms of the knower and the known even in the absence of the external objects, so also the perceptions of the post etc. in the waking state too, should be taken to appear in these forms in the absence of external objects; because, both are after all perceptions, and cognition is common to them both").

Another argument that Berkeley has cleverly introduced in the *Principles* in his support, and which, extremely plausible as it is, has been greatly successful in puzzling the simple unsophisticated minds of the ignorant common folk, is the relativity of the sense-impressions to the nature and condition of the sense-organs. A thing does not necessarily taste equally sweet to all men, and the same figure might appear small to one while large to another. Nay, we might even go further and observe that the same thing is perceived differently even by one and the same percipient at different times and under different conditions. May we not conclude from this that these qualities exist, consequently, not in the external 'thing' perceived, but rather in the percipient mind it self? "But for your farther satisfaction," argues Philonous in the *Dialogues*, "take this along with you: that which at other times seems sweet, shall to a distempered palate, appear bitter. And, nothing can be plainer than that divers persons perceive different tastes in the same food; since that which one man delights in, another abhors. And how could this be, if the taste was something really inherent in the food?"[1] This device is constantly made use of in the *Dialogues* with regard to almost every sensible quality. One more instance will therefore suffice

The relativity of sense impressions.

1. *Dialogues. Selections*, p. 129.

here. "Even our own eyes do not always represent objects to us after the same manner. In the *jaundice* every one knows that all things seem yellow..... From all which, should it not seem to follow that all colours are equally apparent and that none of those which we perceive are really inherent in any outward object?"[1]

A common reader of the *Principles* and the *Dialogues* is struck with the presence of a peculiar argument in the latter which is conspicuously absent in the former. It makes its first appearance while tackling the problem of the external existence of the heat in the fire. A sensation of heat or cold, it is argued at the start, is invariably accompanied by a sensation of either pain or pleasure. A sudden leap is then taken from this accepted fact of accompaniment to a conclusion regarding the identity of these two kinds of sensations. The sensation of heat or cold, it is at once concluded, is therefore nothing but such a sensation pleasurable or painful as the case may be; and further, since neither pleasure nor pain can exist in an unperceiving thing, nor can heat and cold too exist in any external thing. A strange and puzzling argument indeed! The reader is confronted with it once more in connection with the discussion of the existence of the tastes.

A peculiar argument.

1. *Ibid*, p. 135.

We have so far devoted our attention exclusively to the positive arguments that Berkeley has urged in his treatises in support of his revolutionary tenet. Let us now turn a little to the negative arguments, which not being so important as the former, we shall hastily pass over. Berkeley has devoted more than one section in his *Principles* to the refutation of the arbitrary Lockian distinction between the primary and secondary qualities of matter. Locke, as is very well-known, divided the qualities of matter in two parts, viz. primary and secondary; and while he granted an existence independent of sense-perception to the former class, he denied the same to the latter. But such an arbitrary and essentially unphilosophical classification can not be expected to maintain firmly its own ground for a much longer period, and especially in the hands of a clever and zealous speculator like our author it is no wonder if it was soon dissolved. Berkeley chiefly advanced two cogent arguments against it. In the first place, he very relevantly pointed out that we *never* do have any experience of primary qualities apart from the so-called secondary ones. How then can we say that while the one exists in the thing itself, the other in the mind that perceives? Berkeley's second argument is equally strong. One of the chief grounds for denying an independent external existence to the

Berkeley's negative arguments against the Materialist.

secondary qualities was the fact of their being relative to the nature and condition of the particular sense-organs concerned. But, asks the clever advocate of Immaterialism, is not the same fact true also of the primary qualities?

For those materialists who hold that all or even some of the qualities perceived by us are 'copies' or representations of the actual archetypes existing in the thing itself, Berkeley has in store another strong argument. "An idea" he declares, "can be like nothing but another idea; a colour and sound like nothing but another colour and sound." The original quality, as Berkeley further twits his opponent, is either perceived or not perceived. If perceived, it is but an idea and exists only in the mind. If not, what meaning is there in saying that a colour is like something invisible or a sound like something inaudible and so on?

But there might still be left some materialists who, agreeing with Berkeley that the perceived qualities can not be *copies* of any originals existing independently, would yet maintain that the qualities perceived by us do have *some* material substratum after all, which serves to them as a *support* or *in* which they may be said to *reside*. From opponents like these Berkeley would at once demand an explanation in more clear terms of the exact relation between such unknown material substratum and the

perceived qualities as also a further clarification of the meanings of such words as 'support, flow from, reside in, substratum,' and the like.

Berkeley had determined to leave not even the least ground for the materialist to take shelter in. He therefore spends many a section in disputing the various possible notions of the material substance. He would not suffer the materialist even to define the material substance in the last resort as "an unknown *somewhat*—neither substance nor accident, spirit nor idea, inert, thoughtless, indivisible, immovable, unextended, existing in no place."[1] Such a difinition is tantamount to saying that matter is in fact *nothing*. He argues, besides, that the notion of material substance is not only unnecessary and unwarranted but self-contradictory and repugnant too. The Occasionalistic doctrine is repudiated with a single stroke of pen, by means of the argument that God with His omnipotence and omniscience needs neither any occasions nor any instruments to work out His plans; and the notion of matter as the substratum of the perceived qualities is finally exploded by one more argument that it involves the fallacy of *reductio ad absurdum*.

Out of all the impressive array of arguments that we have found Berkeley advancing in favour of

1. *Principles*, s. 80.

his doctrine, there is one central argument, the very pivot of his Immaterialism, on which all the rest of his discussion depends. The refutation of this vital point being accomplished, the rest of our task will be a mere spade-work, almost all the remainder of the arguments being expected to follow suit and surrender easily. The entire Berkeleyan doctrine of '*esse is percipi*' rests mainly on the psychological argument that in every act of perception what is immediatly perceived is only a group of sensible qualities and nothing else. When I say that I perceive an apple, what I really perceive according to this theory, is nothing besides a certain colour, a certain shape and size and so on. I do not perceive any *material object* called 'apple' apart from the group of particular sensible qualities which alone I immediately perceive. And since these sensible qualities are, in essence, nothing but immaterial *ideas*, in each act of sense-perception there are involved, according to Berkeley, only two elements viz. the mind that perceives and the ideas that are perceived.

Berkeley's arguments for Immaterialism refuted

Now, modern psychology disagrees with all this Berkeleyan account of sense-perception as sketched above, and declares it as totally erroneous.[1]

We do not perceive qualities by themselves.

1. Cf. James: "Every thing or quality felt is felt in outer space. An opinion which has had much currency in

It maintains in opposition that in every act of external perception, a percipient is invariably conscious of an external thing — a 'something' that physically occupies the space without and is different from the qualities belonging to it. Berkeley's account of perception is accordingly condemned as containing an inadequate analysis of our consciousness in sense-perception; and his hypothesis that when perceiving a so-called material 'thing' what we are really conscious of is only a group of certain qualities and nothing besides that, no more holds the field. Psychological and introspective as the argument itself was, it admits of a similar refutation. The critic too, like Berkeley, appeals to the reader to keep all verbal arguments apart and examine carefully his own consciousness when perceiving an external thing; which, when done, will

psychology is that sensible qualities are first apprehended as *in the mind itself*, and then 'projected' from it, or 'extradited', by a secondary intellectual or super-sensational mental act. There is no ground whatever for this opinion. The only facts which even seem to make for it can be much better explained in another way, as we shall see later on. The very first sensation which an infant gets *is* for him the outer universe.....In his dumb awakening to the consciousness of *something there*, a mere *this* as yet, the infant encounters an object in which all the 'categories of the understanding' are contained. *It has externality, objectivity, unity, substantiality, causality, in the full sense in which any later object or system of objects has these things.*"—*Psychology*, p. 15.

prove the fact that in each act of external perception the percipient is undoubtedly conscious of a thing that is different from the sensations or 'ideas' that he receives. Analysing our consciousness in an act of external perception, Ward remarks, "Muscular effort without simultaneous sensations of contact would not yield the distinct presentation of something resistant occuping the space from which we have been obtruded and to which we would return. Nay more, it is in the highest degree an essential circumstance in this experience that the muscular effort, though subjectively initiated, is still only possible when there is contact with something that, as it seems, is making an effort the counterpart of our own."[1] A few pages below he observes again, "of all the constituents of things only one is universally present, that above described as physical solidity. . . . . At the moment of contact an unvarying tactual magnitude is ascertained, while the other qualities and the visual magnitude reach a fixed minimum; then first it becomes possible by effort to change or attempt to change the position and form of what we apprehend. This tangible plenum we thenceforth regard as the seat and source of all the qualities we project into it. In other words, that which occupies space is psychologically the substantial."[2] 'Something', therefore, that occupies the space

1. *Psychological Principles*, p. 163.
2. *Ibid*, p. 167.

without us and which, coming as we do in direct contact with it, we apprehend as something different from and independent of our individual sensations, —*some* such 'thing' necessarily exists when we perceive an external object, and the consciousness of its presence forms an essential constituent of every act of external perception.[1]

1. This same fact of our consciousness, in every perceptual cognition, of the presence of an external thing as apart from our own ideas, is emphasised by the Indian critic too. Refuting the idealistic contention of the *Vidnyanavadin* Bauddha, Shankaracharya observes,

न खल्वभावो बाह्यस्यार्थस्याध्यवसातुं शक्यते। कस्मात्? उपलब्धेः। उपलभ्यते हि प्रतिप्रत्ययं बाह्योऽर्थः स्तम्भः कुड्यं घटः पट इति। नचोपलभ्यमानस्यैवाभावो भवितुमर्हति।.....यत उपलब्धिव्यतिरेकोऽपि बलादर्थस्याभ्युपगन्तव्य उपलब्धेरेव। नहि कश्चिदुपलब्धिमेव स्तम्भः कुड्यं चेत्युपलभते। उपलब्धिविषयत्वेनैव तु स्तम्भकुड्यादीन्सर्वे लौकिका उपलभन्ते"।

(*Brahma-Sutras*, II, 28. "Indeed it is impossible to maintain the non-existence of the external objects. Why? Because of the fact that we are conscious of their existence. We invariably cognise some external object, whether a post or a wall or a jar corresponding to the idea in each perception; and it will not be possible to assert the non-existence of that which is actually experienced by us.....The acceptance of the existence of the external object apart from our consciousness of it, is necessary on the ground of the nature of the cognition itself. No one experiences a post or a wall as perception itself; these are cognised by all men only as the objects of their perceptions.")

Psychological writers apply accordingly in these days a peculiar and significant term to our 'sensations', or, as Berkeley would have it, our 'ideas'. Leading psychologists speak of these now-a-days as 'presentations', their duty being to 'present' something to the percipient mind. They must, therefore, be necessarily different from the objects which they 'present'. Sensations can not be properly identified with the things sensed, nor presentations with the external objects presented. Berkeley, however, appears at times to overlook this most important distinction. "What he calls ideas bear much resemblance to presentations; but in distinction from them they are presentative of nothing apart from themselves. Ideas for Berkeley are both presentations and what presentations are presentative of. He does not distinguish carefully between the actual process of perception, the particular experience in psychical individual, and the thing or the object perceived. His theory suffers seriously, in fact, from absence of psychological analysis."[1]

To sum up. Whenever we say we perceive an external thing by means of our senses, we actually perceive not the qualities alone and by themselves, but the qualities along with and as belonging to some actually existing material occupant of the

1. Johnston: *Development of Berkeley's Philosophy*, p 154.

space without. It is useless to argue that the material object cannot be said to 'support' the qualities. For, the relation of substance and attribute is after all a unique relation; and a skillful dispute about words can by itself neither explode it nor disprove its reality. Besides, can Berkeley himself explain how the 'ideas' can exist, as he often puts it, 'in the mind that perceives them'? How exactly are they perceived by the finite mind, and how created by the Infinite Being? Unique relations these, as Berkeley himself must after all admit at some place or other.

There is in this connection one more point of importance for the consideration of which we may well divert here our topic a little. It is certainly instructive for us to examine critically the substitute that Berkeley offers in place of the usually assumed material substance. The external ideas of perception, as Berkeley himself is obliged to admit, are beyond the utmost capacity of human beings to produce or destroy, though may be perceived by them. When I go to a forest for a ramble and open my eyes there, I cannot but perceive the mountains and the rivers around me; and when I look up on a clear cloudless night in the starry heavens above, either I must shut my eyes and

Berkeley's spiritual substitute in place of the material substance critically examined.

perceive nothing, or else must willy-nilly perceive without any option the myriads of little sparkling lights that every moment proclaim the infinite glory of God. The same happens during every minute of our waking life, and it is this most apparent phenomenon viz. the utter incapacity and helplessness of the finite percipient in respect of these ideas, that has time and again brought into prominence the important question as to the cause of all these ideas of sense-experience, this wonderful earth and this perplexing heaven, that every moment force themselves on our sense organs.

Now, the ordinary man, undisturbed by sophistical reasonings, believes in this connection that the immediate cause of our ideas of external perception is some material object actually existing without us, while the ultimate ground of all existence is of course the Infinite Spirit himself. When I perceive an idea of a mountain, this idea owes its existence *immediately* to some material substance actually occupying the space without and in which the attributes perceived by me do properly inhere; and when I perceive a chair under me, it is not a mere collection of certain sensible qualities by themselves, but an actually existing material substance to which the attributes may be said to belong. To Berkeley, on the contrary, any such conception of material substance apart from the

attributes is unnecessary and repugnant. Neither sense nor reason, in the opinion of the great Immaterialist, ever warrants its assumption. We have, however, already seen how such material substence *is* actually perceived. But even keeping the question of actual sence-perception apart, and assuming for the present that no such substance is as a matter of fact perceived by us, is the notion of material substance really so repugnant and unwarranted as Berkeley shows it to be? Can any one properly dispense with it in any reasonable explanation that he might offer of this universe? *Has even Berkeley himself really done away with it in his explanation* of our ideas of sense-perception? Or is his new explanation in essence the same as the old popular one only couched in a different terminology?

We must first carefully bear in mind the common points between the popular and Berkeleyan view. It is admitted on both sides that the ideas of external perception are not self-contained but warrant some external cause besides themselves, the only issue that is raised being one regarding the nature of this external cause. While the popular view places it in material substance, Berkeley places it in God. But the functions that the latter attributes to the Divine Being in this connection show that the difference between the two views is little more than

a matter of terminology. The materialist, complains Berkeley, cannot explain as to how exactly does matter produce these ideas and as to what that relation precisely is which holds between these two. But can he himself answer such questions with reference to the cause that he advocates? That matter is not immediately perceived is Berkeley's another complaint. But is his God an object of immediate sense-perception? Material substance, objects the exponent of Immaterialism, is unnecessary even as an *instrument* or an *occasion*, because the omnipotent God needs no such secondary causes to assist or remind him in his work. But is not Berkeley's own theory regarding the existence of other finite beings based on a clear admission of some such secondary causes that are supposed to do the work that God would nevertheless have himself done in their absence?[1] Besides, as we shall soon see below, the argument from dreams unsympathetically turns as much against Berkeley's own theory of divine causation, as against that of his materialistic opponents. In fact, we may observe in conclusion that the two portions in Berkeley's metaphysical writings—his destructive criticism and his constructive positive contribution — fall sadly apart, and are not quite consistent with one another, what is loudly disclaimed in the one being

1. *Vide infra* Book III, chap. II.

tacitly assumed in the other.[1] The concept of material substance stands essentially, with Locke and the commonsense man, for 'some external cause

1. Besides the above-mentioned difficulties which are found to beset equally the Berkeleyan conception of the cause of our ideas, as well as the one put forward by the materialists like Locke and others, there are the following additional points in this connection which will prove as fatal to the Immaterialist's assumption of the Spiritual Substance, as they did to the commonsense conception of the material substance as the substratum of our ideas.

(i) Berkeley had repudiated altogether the possibility of any perceived idea being a 'copy' of an unperceived original, on the ground, *inter alia*, that *we* can never know this fact as we perceive immediately only our own idea and never the alleged original in itself. But can he perceive the divine ideas of which he declares our ideas to be the exact copies ? He maintains that the ideas perceived by us in our waking state are caused by God. But how can he ever know that the idea which he immediately perceives is the *same* as the one actually caused by God, since he is, *ex hypothesi*, confined exclusively to the former and can never perceive the latter ?

(ii) Berkeley had caught the Materialist in an ingenious dilemma. 'Is the original quality perceived or not? If perceived, it is but an idea of the sense. If not, how can the colour be ever said to represent something invisible, a sound something inaudible, and so on ?' But we may as well turn this very dilemma against its own author. "Is your archetypal divine idea perceived by us or not ? If

of the ideas of sense-perception which can neither exist by themselves nor can be created and maintained by the finite percipient himself.' But this

perceived, it is but an idea of the sense, and consequently no more a divine idea as you call it; for according to your own statement the ideas of God are not the ideas of sense, as ours are. If, on the other hand, it is not perceived by our senses, what meaning is there in saying that an idea perceived by our senses is the ectype of something that is admittedly impossible of being ever perceived by them."

(iii) Time and again, Berkeley accosts his interlocutor in the *Dialogues* to remind him of the fact that we perceive immediately only our own ideas and not any cause of theirs. He warns his opponent to remain constantly on the alert, lest he may be induced to assume the existence of any material *cause* of these ideas which alone we perceive. But is not his own assumption and inference of the existence of the divine cause of our ideas on the same footing as the one which the commonsense man is wont to do ? Is *this* cause ever perceived ? Why should he then object to the popular assumption of the material substance, if he is to make a similar one himself ?

It is useless to multiply the points. In fact, the reader will have clearly observed from the above that Berkeley's new substitute for the exploded material substance is little different except in terminology, from the old conception which at so great pains he attempted to demolish. It is this very fact that is brought out in the following critical words of Dr. Harold Hoffding: "Berkeley carries on Locke's examination into the origin of ideas, and discusses the question as to what we can really know beyond the

description, as a critical reader will at once perceive, applies equally to the Berkeleyan conception of God as well.[1]

reality given in our perceptions and ideas. He follows out his logical consequences with a remorselessness which, in spite of his love of truth, he would perhaps hardly have displayed, had it not been that *his lively religious faith was ever ready to supplement immediately what his philosophical criticism had cut away.*" [Italics mine]—*History of Modern Philosophy*, Meyer's Translatian, Vol. I, pp. 417-18.

1. It might here be contended on behalf of the great Immaterialist that notwithstanding the few points of agreement between the two, Locke's material substance and Berkeley's Divine Being differ nevertheless in one most important point, viz. that while the former is inert and powerless the latter is just the contrary of it. Now, we need not for the present dispute this fact (though I will incidentally offer here a couple of points for the reader to carefully ponder over:—(i) Is 'activity' really essential on the part of an object in order that it may be perceived? When I perceive an ink-stand before me, shall I be decidedly wrong if I maintain that the ink-stand, while I am perceiving it, is entirely passive, and that no 'activity' is involved on its part, the activity of the perceiving self and the passive presence of the ink-stand being an adequate explanation of the act of perception? (ii) Secondly, is matter in reality absolutely powerless? It is true that it is devoid of all power of *volition*. But is it also totally incapable of performing even the merely mechanical acts? May not the vast development of machinery in modern times, and the increasing use of steam--'power', electric--

We have thus refuted at great length the general argument advanced by Berkeley against the concept of material substance. He had argued that the concept is suggested neither by the sense nor by the reason — not by the former, because the alleged material substance is not perceived by our senses which can cognise nothing besides the qualities; and not by the latter because the concept of matter is unnecessary — God himself being a sufficient explanation of the phenomena of our sense-perception as well as repugnant and self-contradictory. We have, however, conclusively shown that both these

'power', water—'power', and the like, throw any light on this point?. But it is certainly difficult to understand the reason why a writer who is willing to admit in the Infinite Being the capacity to create and maintain *inert ideas* that produce sensations in the finite minds, should yet consider it 'repugnant and self-contradictory' for the same God to create some permanent *inert substances* which, when perceived by the finite percipients, may 'cause' sensations in them; the only difference between the two views being that in the former, as in the Occasionalism of Geulinx and Malebranche, God is supposed to intervene every moment like an unskillful watchmaker — to use the well known metaphor—who, unable to produce good lasting watches, is obliged to look to its working every moment; while in the latter view, as in the Monadology of Leibniz, He is assumed to produce once for all a material object which until destroyed or altered keeps on producing its ideas in the minds of the finite percipients.

arguments are fallacious. We have seen how Berkeley's denial of the sense-perception of the material substance is due only to an inadequate analysis of our perceptual experience; while as for the latter part of the Berkeleyan contention, we have seen how the concept of material substance far from being unnecessary and repugnant, is tacitly implied even in the doctrines of the very philosopher who is most emphatically against its assumption. The refutation of the most important general argument being thus accomplished, let us now betake ourselves to a critical consideration of the remainder of the Berkeleyan arguments in favour of his immaterialistic hypothesis.

The analogy of the waking life with the dream experience is a stock argument of the sceptics and the idealists. In the state of sleep, as is a matter of every-day experience with almost all men, the mind spins out of itself numberless things, animate as well as inanimate, all of which are nevertheless dissolved into nothingness the moment hard reality steps in and rudely unties the web of fancy. May it not be that the things perceived by us in the waking state too are also nothing but a creation of our own selves? Whichever way this important question is answered, however, we must lodge here a relevent complaint

The analogy of the waking life with the dream experience repudiated

against the proposers of this argument, who are often found to overlook one important fact in this connection. The conclusion arrived at by means of an analogical argument can at best be only a *probable* one; certain it never can be. Even if an analogy is logical and valid, it can at best only raise a probability in favour of the conclusion the proposer wants to establish; by itself it can do nothing more. The reader should therefore be cautious in estimating the value of any such argument — not excluding the present one based on the alleged analogy between the waking life and its representation in sleep. Having given this very essential warning at the start, our chief intention in this place is, however, to raise a deeper question than this. We question whether the analogy is valid at all. Does the dream experience concur with the waking life in essential points? Or do they, on the other hand, only agree in unessential respects while differ in those that are essential?

Now, we maintain in this connection that our perceptions during the experience of a dream do not agree with those in the waking life in points which are really essential to the argument under consideration. It is true that so far as the *subjective* element of belief is concerned, it is present as much in the one as in the other. We believe in the independent external existence of the table as strongly when we

perceive it in a dream as when we do so in the actual light of day. But is the subjective factor of belief the only essential point in the consideration of the true reality of the things perceived by us? To place the ideas experienced by us in the waking life and those experienced in a dream on the same level merely because the subjective factor of belief is common to them both is, in fact, to overlook the most essential *objective* factor involved in our perceptions of the latter sort. A careful study of the Berkeleyan treatises will bring out the fact that he himself admits an extremely vital point of distinction between the two sorts of ideas. The ideas in dreams, frenzies, and the like, he admits unreservedly, are subjectively initiated, while those perceived by us in our waking life do not in the least depend upon the will of the individual percipient, but are on the other hand objectively caused and maintained by God. Now, this is really a very important admission on the part of Berkeley, and virtually repudiates the analogical argument that he advances elsewhere. The most essential factor of objective causation which is present in the perceptions of waking life is absent in our experience in dreams, and the analogy can not therefore hold true.[1]

1. In fact we may classify our 'ideas' into three sorts according to the degree of reality they possess. The ideas perceived by us in our waking life possess both the subjective belief as well as the objective causation, and will therefore stand first in the scale. Next come those perceived by us in dreams, frenzies, and the like, which possess only the former element but not the latter. While, the ideas of our imagination possess neither of these two and are the last to close our list.

But besides this there is another important point of difference between the two sorts of human perceptions, which we will do well to note carefully at this place. It is a fact very well known that our perceptions in the state of dream are all of them contradicted by the waking perceptions that invariably follow them. Is anything experienced on the contrary during the twenty-four hours of our ordinary life which contradicts our perceptions in the waking state ?[1] It might be objected that as the

1. cf. Shankaracharya " न स्वप्नादिप्रत्ययवज्जाग्रत्प्रत्यया भवितुमर्हन्ति । कस्मात् ? वैधर्म्यात् । वैधर्म्यं हि भवति स्वप्नजागरितयोः । किं पुनर्वैधर्म्यम् । बाधाबाधाविति ब्रूमः । बाध्यते हि स्वप्नोपलब्धं वस्तु प्रतिबुद्धस्य मिथ्या मयोपलब्धो महाजनसमागम इति, नह्यास्ति मम महाजनसमागमो निद्रागलानं तु मे मनो बभूव तेनैषा भ्रान्तिरुद्भूवेति । एवं मायादिष्वपि भवति यथायथं बाधः । नैवं जागरितोपलब्धं वस्तु स्तम्भादिकं कस्यांचिदप्यवस्थायां बाध्यते । अपिच स्मृतिरेषा यत्स्वप्नदर्शनम् । उपलब्धिस्तु जागरितदर्शनम् । .....दर्शितं तु वैधर्म्यं स्वप्नजागरितयोः । " (*Brahma-Sutras* etc. II, ii, 29.)

("The perceptions in the waking state can not be treated as similar to those in a dream, because the two differ in nature. The objects experienced by us in our

perceptions in the dream-life are negated by those in the waking state, these latter are equally negated in the state of sleep. A workman, to add the illustration usually adduced in this connection, who leads the ordinary life of a carpenter for twelve hours every day and regularly dreams for the remaining hours each day that he is a king, and each one of whose dreams is, further in continuation of the last preceeding one, has as much reason to believe that he is *really* a king as he has to believe that he is a carpenter. The objection and the illustration, however, overlook one very essential point. It is not the continuity alone that is found in our waking perceptions that makes them superior to the perceptions of dream. The essential point in this connection is, on the other hand, the all-important fact that in the waking life we have before our minds simultaneously both the sorts of perceptions, one through sense and the other through memory;

dreams are negated by our consciousness in the waking state; thus, for instance, 'I wrongly thought that I met a great man; in reality there was no such meeting,—only my mind was under the deceptive influence of sleep which caused the illusion.' Similarly are negated the objects experienced by us during magic, jugglery, and the like. None of the objects perceived in the waking state—such as the posts etc.—is, on the contrary, ever contradicted in any state. Moreover, the experiences of a dream are the effects of traces left behind by memory, while those of the waking state, of immediate perception.")

and that *in the face of the simultaneous presence before the mind of these two rival sorts of perceptions* we declare the one as real and the other as a mere false delusion, a sorry result of abnormal mental or physical conditions. But is any man conscious while he is experiencing a dream, of his life in the waking state—may be, even through memory? It is precisely this fact that makes a world of difference between the two. The carpenter, while entrapped in the self-spun web of fancy and jubilant over the delusive possession of the unreal crown, has not the least consciousness of his ever having lived the life of a carpenter. The same poor fellow—poor in reality though rich in dreams—is, however, clearly conscious on the next morning of his having led a life of the ruler a few hours before-conscious, alas, with all the painful sting that would naturally attach to the glaring contrast between the happy dream and the sorry actuality. A carpenter who regularly dreams each day that he is a king, and a king who regularly dreams that he is a carpenter, are not, therefore, on the same level in the actual scheme of life, even though the dreams of both are each day in continuation of the last.

The analogy is fatal to Berkeley himself.

So far we have seen how the analogy alleged to exist between the dream life and its waking prototype can not hold true as these two differ in more

than one essential respect. But suppose the analogy is held valid; can it in any way really help Berkeley in the advocation of his doctrines? For a philosopher like Berkeley, who strenuously maintains the hypothesis of Divine Causation, the argument from dreams is really a double-edged sword likely to hurt as much the proposer himself as the opponent against whom it is wielded. A true and consistent application of the analogy between the dream-life and the waking one will prove extremely fatal to Berkeley's own doctrines. We believe in dreams that the ideas perceived by us at that time are really caused by things existing without us; on waking we find that there are no such things; from which Berkeley hastens to conclude that even in the waking life our ideas are caused without any such things actually existing as we suppose. But does not Berkeley equally believe while perceiving a dream that the ideas perceived by him at that particular moment are Divinely caused? Is he conscious *during the dream* that the ideas he is perceiving are really only subjective creations of his own mind? On waking, however, he is forced to observe the fact that all the wonderful ideas experienced by him a few hours before were his own creations and *not* the divinely caused ideas which he believed them to be. Might we not conclude then that the ideas perceived by us in our waking life too are *not* really Divinely

caused, and that Berkeley's belief and assumption in this respect is as erroneous as the one which he himself attacked? We have thus found Berkeley in a peculiar dilemma. If he accepts the analogy as valid, his own hypothesis of Divine Causation of our ideas in the waking life is in serious danger.[1] While, on the other hand, if he were to reject it—as we insist he ought to do—the hypothesis of his materialistic opponent is so far safe and out of danger.

The argument from the relativity of our sense-impressions to the nature and condition of our sense-organs is really much weaker than the one just considered by us above, and any serious importance attached to it by a philosopher like Berkeley will only point to the unphiloso-

What does the relativity of sense impressions really prove?

phical and unscientific way of arguing on the part of

1. Besides the danger to his hypothesis of Divine Causation, a full and consistent application of the analogy between the waking and the dream life will also seriously endanger Berkeley's maintainance of the existence of other finite spirits besides himself. Do we not believe in dreams that we actually hold inter-communication with various living beings which on waking we find utterly non-existing? See further on this point Bk. III, chap. II. In fine, as a critical reader will perceive for himself, a consistent application of the above analogy will thus lead a philosopher straight to complete Solipsism.

its proposer. A piece of sugar tastes sweet to one, while bitter to another or even to the same person in a distempered condition. But can it show that the *entire* cause of the taste of sweetness therefore resides in the particular percipient himself and nothing in the piece of sugar? The same water feels hot to one hand while cold to the other; but will a scientific man therefore argue that the cause of the sensations of temparature resides *entirely* in the hands themselves? It will be as absurd as arguing that a wrestler A has absolutely no strength in himself because while an opponent B finds him too strong another opponent C finds him comparatively weeker. All that the instances of such sorts can prove is that the cause does not reside in any one of the two things by itself. The experiment regarding the temparature of water can show, for example, only that the cause of the temparature sensations does not reside entirely in the water itself but is *partially* in the condition of the sense-organs too. It can only refute the one-sided statement of the opponent, but can not suffer the proposer to advocate another equally one-sided statement for himself. Berkeley, however, has kindly cut short our labours in this respect, for he himself admits this weakness in the argument under consideration. "Though it must be confessed" he writes in the *Principles*, "this method of arguing does not so much prove that there is no extension or colour in

an outward object, as that *we* do not know by *sense* which is the *true* extension or colour of the object."[1] Notwithstanding this important confession, however, Berkeley appears to forget it conveniently while arguing on the same lines in the *Dialogues*.

The present commonplace argument of the sceptics contains in addition an extremely subtle fallacy to notice which will certainly please a critical student of Berkeley. If we shall examine with great care the assumptions on which this particular argument is based, we shall perceive at once that no subjective idealist is ever entitled to make use of it; and that therefore, so far as Berkeley is taken to propound the doctrine of subjective Idealism, he too is guilty of a glaring inconsistency in employing this argument in his support. The argument that the heat in a cup of water resides really in the percipient himself and not in the water, is based on the common observation that the *same* water is felt hot by the one hand while cold by the other. But then is it not obvious here that this cup of water which is declared hot by the one hand and cold by the other must be the *same*—exactly same and numerically indentical—and not two different similar cups? If the water as felt by the left hand is not the *same* as that felt by the right one, there is absolutely no contradiction involved in the two different feelings

1. *Principles* s, 15.

and we do not arrive at the conclusion which the immaterialist wants us to infer from this experiment. Similarly if the honey tasted sweet by one percipient is not exactly the *same* as that tasted bitter by another, the desired conclusion regarding the existence of the tastes entirely in the mind of the percipient can not be established. Every proposer of this argument *must therefore assume beforehand the external objective existence of an object of sense-perception* which remains the same for diverse perceptions on the part of the same or even different percipients, and is hence independent of any perception on the part of a particular individual. No subjective Idealist can as a consequence consistently make any use of it. The argument is, in other words, as employed by a subjective Idealist, self-contradictory and internally inconsistent, for it aims to demolish the very assumption on which alone it can proceed.

Berkeley's argument that a sensation of heat exists really in the mind itself, because such a sensation is not different from the one of pleasure or pain which invariably accompanies it, and which is obviously impossible of any existence outside a percipient mind, is either a very funny way of arguing, or involves a very subtle fallacy. To the natural contention that the sensation of heat is not the same as the sensation of pain, but rather

the cause of it, Berkeley offers the following interesting answer:

Phil. Upon putting your hand near the fire, do you perceive one simple uniform sensation, or two distinct sensations?

Hylas. But one simple sensation.

Phil. Is not the heat immediately perceived?

Hylas. It is. *Phil.* And the pain? *Hylas.* True.

Phil. Seeing therefore they are immediately perceived at the same time, and the fire affects you only with one simple, or uncompounded idea, it follows that this same simple idea is both the intense heat immediately perceived, and the pain; and, consequently, that the intense heat immediately perceived is nothing distinct from a particular sort of pain.

But if we were to continue this line of agrument still further, we will soon make short work of a great part of the psychologist's labours. When I perceive a beautiful statue before me, do I perceive only one uniform sensation, or two different ones, one of the form and one of the resultant pleasure? of course one uniform sensation, as Berkeley would have us answer. Therefore, it will follow that the sensation of form is nothing distinct from that of the pleasure! And can the other sensations—of colour, sound, taste etc—now lag behind? We will, in fact, soon find us landing in a very novel and interesting situation in which all the various human sensations

and feelings shall have been reduced to two fundamental elements—pleasure and pain! The ideal of science realised in psychology! A beautiful supplement to the hedonistic theories propounded by ethical writers!

His confusion between the *content* and the *quality* of a sensation.

Behind the apparant simplicity of the present agrument of the Immaterialist, there is hidden, however, a deep and a subtle fallacy. Berkeley's contention that the sensation of intense heat is not different from that of pain is a clear instance of a confusion between the *content* of the painful sensation and its *quality*. It is the same celebrated fallacy of the hedonists who confused a pleasurable sensation with a sensation *of* pleasure. A sensation may be pleasant or painful and may yet be—as it most often is—*of* something which is quite different from any such pleasure or pain that *only accompanies it*. When I perceive the famous Taj-Mahal, I feel no doubt a pleasant sensation. But though the sensation is pleasant (or pleasurable), it is *not* therefore *of* pleasure; it is of the Taj-Mahal. To express this same important distinction in technical terms, though pleasure is the *quality* of the sensation, its *content* is Taj-Mahal. Similarly, to take Berkeley's own instance, in the case of the sensation of intense heat, though intense pain is the *quality* of the sensation, its *content* nevertheless is the heat

perceived and not the pain felt; and it is certainly a 'Himalayan' blunder—if I may use the expression—on the part of a metaphysical writer to confuse the two in the manner in which Berkeley appears to do it.

Is a sensation identical with its object?

It is this very confusion that is really at the root of Berkeley's identification of the sensation and its object. When I perceive the moon, my individual sensation is certainly different from the yellow patch that is perceived. The latter is *its content* and not the sensation itself. That the two are found to *accompany* one another at all times is but natural, for how can any content of a sensation be *experienced* apart from the sensation itself, the latter being nothing different from the experience of such content? And, again, how is it possible to experience a sensation and at the same time to leave out all its content, seeing that to experience a sensation means just to experience its content? But then the fact that the two—the sensation and its content—are invariably found to accompany each other cannot necessarily indicate that the two are identical; for, it may as well be that the two are related to one another as cause to effect,[1] or as joint effects of a third common cause.

1. Cf Shankaracharya's criticism of the idealistic argument under consideration:— (Contd.)

Berkeley's doctrine that the *esse* of each object of perception is its *percipi*, besides being in fact a very inadequate expression of the true nature of existence, is really inconsistent with his own hypothesis of divine causation. If the existence of a thing is in truth comprised wholly within its perception on the part of a spirit there is left no room for divine causation. If, on the other hand, God is to be alloted the duty of creating our ideas, it can no more be maintained that the *esse* of an

Closing remarks. *Esse est percipi* inconsistent with divine causation.

"अतएव सहोपलंभनियमोऽपि प्रत्ययविषययोरुपायोपेयभावहेतुको नाभेदहेतुक इत्यभ्युपगन्तव्यम्."

("Therefore also—i. e. because we are clearly conscious of the distinction between the thing and its perception by us—the invariable fact of the simultaneous experience of the two should be taken to prove not that the object is identical with the sensation but that it is the means of the latter.") It is still more interesting to note भामती Bhamati's भाष्य or commentary on the above quotation from Shankaracharya:—

"यथा हि सर्वं चाक्षुषं प्रभारूपानिविद्धं बुद्धिबोध्यं नियमेन मनुजैरूपलभ्यते, न चैतावता घटादिरूपं प्रभात्मकं भवति, किंतु प्रभोपायत्वाच्चियमः, एवमिहाप्यात्मसाक्षिकानुभवोपायत्वादर्थस्यैकोपलम्भनियम इति।"

Let the reader carefully note that both Shankaracharya as well as the author of Bhamati emphasise the fact of our direct consciousness of the external object as much as the modern writers on psychology do.

idea is its *percipi* alone. Nay, we might even go further and observe that the *esse est percipi* doctrine goes really against the omnipotence and causal activity of God which Berkely would have never suffered any one even to doubt. For, if the existence of a thing depends really upon its *being perceived* by some spirit, it will follow that in spite of any amount of violent efforts on the part of the Infinite Being, he will be unable to bring into existence any given idea, if there is no spirit to perceive it at that particular moment. Berkeley might no doubt possibly rejoin here that creation and perception are identical in the case of God, or at least that the former necessarily includes the latter, and that therefore when God is said to create any idea, He at least must be held to perceive it. Such a reply, however, though capable of offering a temporary relief, is unable to offer a complete solution of our original difficulty. For, Berkeley himself has maintained that though things might be said to be created anew at the time of each perception so far as the finite spirits are concerned, for God at least a thing when once created remains the same till subjected by Him to any further modifications. It follows from this that when once a thing is *created* by God, He can '*only perceive*' it afterwards whenever He wishes, without the necessity of creating it again. So that, though the first creation of it might be said to include or be accompanied by its perception

on the part of God, the later perceptions of the very same thing are not accompanied by its creation. *Creation and perception must then be two quite distinct processes even in the case of the Infinite Being.* And immediately with our arrival at this conclusion the doctrine that the *esse* of each objct of sense perception is tis *percipi* falls helplessly to the ground; for, a thing to come into existence must be created by some spirit, and any such creation, as we have shown above, is distinct from and involves something more than mere perception even on the part of the Divine Spirit—let alone the finite ones.

But if a thing cannot come into existence merely upon its being perceived by a spirit, it follows as a natural consequence that neither can it pass out of existence by a mere absence of any such perception. If creation is the result of some special and additional activity besides mere perception, the result of that additional activity must be held to survive-till modified or destroyed by further activity–even though the perception ceases. It might be that the thing *as perceived by us* is a joint result of the original creative activity as well as our individual act of perception, and that therefore a thing will not necessarily remain *exactly as we had perceived it* when our perception of it ceases. But it cannot follow that the thing will completely pass out of existence with the cessation of its perception by the

spirits. We thus find that the *esse est percipi* doctrine is untenable in both the directions.

Berkeley an overzealous spiritualist.

The important fact in this connection that every student of Berkeley must carefully bear in mind is that though it is his revolutionary view regarding the nature and existence of matter, rather than any thing else, that he is chiefly famous for, amongst the common people as well as the literary scholars, this nevertheless does *not* form the central theme of his philosophy, and it was not his intention at all to advocate it for its own sake. The central lesson that he wanted to preach through his philosophical writings was certainly not destructive but constructive, and his *esse est percipi* was intended only as a step in the advocacy of his views regarding the existence and omnipotence of the Divine Spirit. He was no sceptic by profession, one bent only to prove the helplessness of human reason; nor did he oppose matter for its own sake. His chief aim was to bring men nearer to God, and this he thought—whether rightly or wrongly is another question—could be achieved better by denying, rather than admitting, the usually supposed material substance. His only aim, therefore, in rejecting the material substance was to substitute in its place another spiritual one.[1] "Berkeley's treatises, we

1. Cf Hoernle: "If Berkeley denies the existence of

must remember," observes Green, "though professedly philosophical, really form a theological polemic."[1] It is in this light, therefore, that we must look at his *esse est percipi* principle. He wanted to confine the *esse* of each idea to perception by some spirit, because he was afraid that an admission of the survival of an object even in the absence of its perception by a spirit would really be tantamount to an admission of an independent material substance having an external objective existence. He was a spiritualist from first to last—an overzealous spiritualist we might say, who in his excessive enthusiasm for the spiritual substance failed to observe that an admission of the material substance as the *immediate* cause of our ideas of external perception, besides being extremely essential and indispensable in the face of our actual sense-experience, need not really come by any means in the way of any one's true and earnest devotion towards the Almighty God, if supplemented by the faith that the *ultimate* creator and maintainer of all—not excluding the material substance itself—is none else but God or the Infinite Being himself.

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matter, it is solely in order to make room for God."—*Idealism as a Philosophical Doctrine*, *p. 60.*

1. *Introduction to Hume*, s. 155.

CHAPTER II.

THE QUALITIES OF MATTER.

The very first tendency of man is to believe in the absolute reality of whatever is experienced by him, and it is only later on that the stage of doubt comes in, doubt being far more reflective than easy belief. Now, this same is true in philosophical speculations also. The earliest philosophical theory concerning the problem of Reality was that of Natural Realism. Primitive man held the crude belief—the common sense man does so even now—that whatever qualities he perceives in a thing exist actually in the thing *in the very form in which he perceives them;* in other words, that a thing remains what he perceives it to be, independently of any perception. Colours, tastes, smells, heat, cold, form,—all these exist in the thing actually whether anybody perceives them or not.

The common-sense notion of a thing.

But ere long, philosophers soon perceived that Natural Realism in its crudest form can not hold true. A thing tastes sweet to one, while bitter to another who is sick; and the same thing changes its colours as its distance from the perceiver varies. Are we to suppose in such cases that contradictory qualities exist in the very same thing ?

Difficulties like these soon led the speculative minds to distinguish between certain qualities of a thing which were supposed to inhere permanently in it and exist independently of any perception, and those which were supposed to be dependent upon the perception for their real existence. This is just the position taken by Locke and Descartes. The qualities of the former sort—those that were granted real existence independent of all perception—were called primary qualities; while those that were observed to change with a variation in the perceiving organs were called secondary qualities. Thus colours, sounds, tastes, smells, temperature, and such other qualities were ranked by Locke under the latter class because they appeared differently in the same thing to different men at the same time, and to the same man at different times. The honey that tastes sweet to me today will not necessarily taste in the same manner when I am satiated with it or when I am sick. On the contrary, qualities like motion, form, extension solidity and number were ranked under primary qualities.

Locke's distinction between the primary and secondary qualities.

The primary qualities exist according to Locke, in the very form in which we perceive them, whether any body perceives them or no. The secondary ones exist only as "*powers* in the things to produce

various sensations in us." When an orange is found to taste sweet and to appear as of a certain colour, what really exists in the thing is not the particular sweetness and the particular colour itself as we perceive it, but only certain powers to produce those particular qualities in us. It follows further from this, that it is only in the case of the primary qualities that our idea is the exact copy of some original quality actually existing in the thing ("their-patterns do really exist in the bodies themselves"—Locke); while, in the case of the secondary qualities, on the other hand, these being in reality nothing but powers in the things to produce in us certain sensations, "there is nothing like our ideas existing in the bodies themselves". The primary qualities are related to our ideas of them as originals to their exact copies; the secondary only as causes to effects. Locke finally derives the secondary qualities from the primary ones, as they are ultimately declared to be nothing but 'the modifications of its primary qualities—atoms and their motions—that are unperceived by us'. Since, therefore, the primary qualities as said above are independent of perception while the secondary depend upon sensations, it may be said, in the words of Fraser, that according to Locke's theory, "we *know* the primary, and we only *feel* the secondary".[1]

1. The reason is that we can *know* only what already exists independently of our knowledge and perception. We

The position of Descartes and Locke as outlined above signified no doubt an advance over the crude Natural Realism; but it was after all only a partial advance. It did not face the entire situation with boldness; and while it attempted to avoid some difficulties, others equally formidable still remained. It was Berkeley who with his acute and penetrating intelligence soon perceived that the distinction between the primary and secondary qualities as maintained by Locke was not ultimately tenable. The arguments that Locke advanced against the external independent existence of his secondary qualities were applied with equal force and success by Berkeley against the external independent existence of the primary qualities also. He thus placed the primary on the same level as the secondary qualities and denied any distinction between them.

Berkeley's arguments against the classification.

(i) Berkeley argued that just as the secondary qualities like colours, tastes, etc. were found by Locke to change with a variation in the perceiving organs, the primary qualities too are found to alter with a change in the state of the body or mind of the individual perceiving them. The same vehicle appears to one passenger as running witn a very fast

do not say that we 'know' pleasure or hunger when we are jubilant or hungry, but that we *feel* it.

motion, while to another as running with a very slow one. Similar remarks apply equally to extension, figure, and such other qualities. All primary qualities, in short, are relative to the perceiving mind just as the secondary qualities which alone were admitted by Locke to be so.

(ii Besides the above, Berkeley brings in another cogent argument against the Lockian distinction. The so-called primary qualities can never be abstracted from the secondary ones. It is impossible, he argues, to abstract qualities like extension and motion from those of colours, sounds and the like. Who can imagine, for instance, a motion apart from a thing in motion,—that thing having necessarily a certain colour, shape, size and every other such quality? "In short, extension, figure, and motion, abstracted from all other qualities, are inconceivable: Where therefore the other sensible qualities are, there must these be also, to wit, in the mind and no where else."[1]

(iii) Locke had maintained, *inter alia*, that while the secondary qualities are nothing but ideas in our own minds, the primary qualities exist actually in the things without, and that in the case of these latter our ideas are the exact copies of the original qualities existing independently in the the things. But, rejoins Berkeley, 'an idea can be

1. *Principles*, s. 10

like nothing but another idea' and that therefore in the case of the primary as well as the secondary qualities, our ideas are *not* copies of any external qualities existing independently of all perception.

(iv). Again, it was maintained by Locke that while the secondary qualities do not, the primary qualities do actually inhere in the thing, which serves as a sort of substratum to those qualities. But Berkeley cut the very root of the whole distinction between the primary and the secondary qualities by denying altogether the external existence of any such thing apart from the ideas perceived by us, any such conception of an unknown material substratum to our ideas being repugnant and unnecessary; and by arguing that even supposing our ideas of the primary qualities to be their exact copies, we can never know this fact, because we are conscious only of the ideas and never of their so called originals.

With the help of these four arguments Berkeley denied any distinction between Locke's primary and secondary qualities, and placed them exactly on the same footing. Both are but ideas in the mind and have an existence relative to perception. While Locke held that only the secondary qualities are *phenomena*, the primary qualities being *noumena*, Berkeley proved

The primary as well as the secondary qualities are but phenomena.

that the primary qualities too no less than the secondary are but phenomena and not independent realities.[1] Neither the primary nor the secondary qualities exist independently out of the mind, and our ideas in neither case are the copies of any external material archetypes.

But in maintaining that the primary qualities can not be distinguished, as Locke did, from the secondary qualities and that the former equally with the latter are but ideas in the percipient mind, Berkeley did not mean to deny totally any reality to these. It would seem at first instance that having completely rejected Locke's material substance, as well as any distinction between the primary and secondary qualities, Berkeley melts this entire beautiful universe into utter nothingness. But it should be carefully noted that whenever all things are declared by Berkeley to be nothing but ideas and these nowhere but 'in the mind of the percipient', he never intends to deny *all* reality whatsoever to these ideas, but *a reality independent of any percipient mind*.[2] The *esse* of the ideas, says Berkeley, is their *percipi*. All ideas are real only so far as

1. *Phenomena* signify realities whose existence depends upon the perceiving mind. The existence of the noumena is independent and absolute.

2. *Vide supra* Bk. II chap. I, and *Principles* sections 4, 35, 40, etc.

perceived by some spirit. But while they are perceived they *are* real and none can reasonably doubt their existence.[1]

1. Hence the critical remark of Fraser that "Berkeley tries to melt down the primary qualities into phenomena like the secondary, affirming at the same time the reality of both, as realised in perceptions."—*Selections*, p. 38 footnote 3.

CHAPTER III.

SAMENESS OR SIMILARITY ?

The question raised in the title of our present chapter is no doubt a very important one, and forms, in fact, one of the crucial tests of the workability of any philosophical theory from the popular point of view. The ordinary man believes, of course, that when ten persons perceive a thing simultaneously, they perceive apparently as well as ultimately *one and the same* thing and not ten similar but numerically *different* things. Philosophers, however, will not attract the attention they actually do, if they agree with the popular notions in all points of dispute. A philosopher is nothing if not critical; and he easily calls to the bar of controversy a popular belief which the ordinary man would feel most absurd even to doubt, and not unoften even declares it incorrect. We accordingly find that the ordinary belief in the continued identity of a thing is not unoften challenged in different degrees by different philosophers. Thus while bolder philosophers like Hume stated unhesitatingly that any such belief is baseless, and that neither do different men perceive the *same* thing at the same time nor does one man himself perceive the *same* thing at different times, Berkeley hesitated to declare such an open breach with common sense.

Nevertheless, his answer to the above crucial question in the *Dialogues* fails to satisfy both the common-sense man as well as the critical philosopher. Common people, says Berkeley, have no abstract notion of numerical identity, and when they say ten men see the same moon they really mean only that those ten persons perceive exactly *similar* ideas. In this sense, he adds, the 'sameness' of one thing as perceived by various men may be maintained even on his own principles. There is also, however, a quite different meaning of 'sameness' which Berkeley could not totally disrgard, and with which he deals in the following words: "But if the term 'same' be used in the acceptation of philosophers—who pretend to an abstracted notion of identity—then according to their sundry definitions of this notion (for it is not yet agreed wherein that philosophic identity consists), it may or may not be possible for divers persons to perceive the same thing". But who cares for these 'philosophic' abstractions? "Whether philosophers shall see fit to call a thing the same or no, is, I conceive, of small importance". To Berkeley the whole dispute is purely verbal. When different persons are affected with exactly similar ideas, "some, regarding only the uniformness of what was perceived, might call it the *same* thing; others, especially regarding the diversity of persons who perceived, might choose the denomination of *different* things. But who sees not that all the dispute is about a

word? To wit, whether what is perceived by different persons may yet have the term 'same' applied to it."

Now, the real fact is that the dispute is *not* about a word and Berkeley has here miserably failed to answer the crucial test applied to his philosophy. Behind the seemingly verbal dispute is hidden a deep one between different philosophical theories regarding the nature and existence of the world of perception and experience. Berkeley, as has been pointed out by eminent critics, reduces all sameness in external things to mere similarity. He fails to perceive clearly the distinction of highest importance involved in mere though exact similarity and complete numerical identity. It is not the 'philosophers,' alone but the common people too, who believe that what they perceive is the *same* and not merely similar thing as others are perceiving at the same time.

But, in a sense, the answer appears to be inevitable for Berkeley, if he wanted to be consistent with his own previous philosophy. For, Berkeley believed that so far as the external things of perception are concerned, they are nothing beyond ideas, Reality consisting in the ideas immediately sensed by us and not in some inert unknown substance hidden behind those ideas. Berkeley's philosophy has been accordingly called sense-realism;

and though it is often classed as subjective Idealism, it may also be called in a sense Natural Realism. He believed that what is sensed is real. Only he differed from others in his view as to the nature of that which is sensed by us. To him it consists of nothing but ideas, and contains no external independent material substance that maintains its identity and remains the *same* in spite of the diversity of its percipients. Now, obviously if all things are nothing but ideas, and if, further, ideas are nothing but subjective modifications, it follows that no two persons can perceive the *same* thing. So far it appears that Berkeley's answer is at least consistent with one aspect of his own philosophy.

Apart from the question of its consistency, however, Berkeley's answer as stated above is certainly not correct. As Fraser remarks, "the question how intercommunication is possible without a numerical identity—not a mere similarity—in the phenomenal signs perceived by each spirit, hardly occurs to him." To dissolve all sameness and accept only similarity in things is not a very convenient position, and he had to find very soon some way or other to get out of it by maintaining that, while for us human beings each thing in created anew at the time of each perception, for God it continues to be the same.[1] But, even here the first part of the solution

1, Thus arise the two famous sorts of reality in the Berkeleyan philosophy, the Archetypal and the Ectypal.

is hardly tenable, while the latter also is not without difficulties. The whole discussion turns upon his theory that external things are nothing apart from ideas. Berkeley's dissolution of external things into ideas suffers, however, both from oversimplification as well as fromlack of discriminative analysis.[1] It is agreed on all hands that Berkeley fails to take adequate notice of a third essential factor involved in all perception viz. some reference to external independent reality. When once such a factor is admitted in every act of perception, it follows at once that the external independent reality continues to maintain its individual numerical identity in spite of the diversity of the percipients. The individual *perceptions* in each man will of course be private to him and so may differ from those of others; but the *thing perceived* will remain the *same*, and not merely similar. Berkeley's blunder consists just in this failure to distinguish between the particular perceptions in each man and the thing perceived by him. With Berkeley, as Johnston nicely remarks, "ideas are both presentations and what presentations are presentative of."

But there is another point regarding this discussion. It is true that Berkeley's answer is not correct. But is it even consistent ? Or, rather, is

1. *Vide* Book II chapters I and IV.

it really inevitable for Berkeley? Supposing we hold with him that any independent material substance is non-existing, and that things are nothing apart from ideas caused by God, must we conclude that when ten persons see the moon, they perceive ten *different* though similar moons, and not rather one and the *same* moon?

Now, if we were to judge from what Berkeley states elsewhere concerning the nature of ideas in his philosophy, any such conclusion would appear to be far from inevitable for him. He maintains there clearly that by ideas he does not mean mere subjective modifications. "When I speak of objects as existing in the mind, or imprinted on the senses, I would not be understood in the gross literal sense as when bodies are said to exist in a place, or a seal to make an mpression upon wax My meaning is only that the mind comprehends or perceives them." [1] Things or ideas exist 'in mind', according to Berkeley, "not by way of mental mode or attribute, but by way of idea." What Berkeley means when he says that things are ideas is, in short, that they bear an objective relation to the percipient mind, or that the mind and the thing bear towards one another the subject-object relationship.

Now, if Berkeley really means by ideas not subjective modifications but only 'objects perceived by

1 *Dialogues*, I, 470.

the subject i. e. by the percipient mind', it is difficult to see why he shirked the responsibility of maintaining on his own principles the real identity of the ideas perceived simultaneously by different percipients. *If* ideas are mere subjective modifications, as they are said to be with Fichte, then, of course, no two persons can see the same moon. But on the above Berkeleyan principles things might be supposed to be nothing apart from objective presentations caused by God, and yet may consistently be said to maintain their identity in the diversity of simultaneous perceptions. If Berkeley was really "not for changing things into ideas, but rather ideas into things", he might easily have answered Hylas in quite a different direction than that of the unhappy answer that he actually gave in the *Dialogues*. The *same* external presentation caused by God, can certainly bear an objective relation simultaneously to more than one percipient. Berkeley's central theme was undoubtedly to demolish the concept of material substance that was alleged to be involved in each perception of an external object. He wanted to substitute the spiritual substance in place of the material one. But it is by no means essential for attaining this goal to deny the sameness in things perceived simultaneously by different men. In fact, a little thinking will bring out the fact that such an attempt on the part of Berkeley is not only inconsistent

with but is even fatal to his hypothesis of the divine causation of all our ideas which he so strenuously maintains. Either then, Berkeley's 'ideas' are really subjective modifications or his answer to Hylas regarding the identity of things in the diversity of simultaneous perceptions is inconsistent and unnecessary in the light of his own previous remarks.[1]

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1. For a fuller treatment of the difficulty suggested in the closing paragraph, *vide infra*, Book IV, chap. I.

CHAPTER IV.

THE THEORY OF PERCEPTION.

According to Berkeley's theory of immediate perception, to put the whole thing in a nutshell, whatever really exists in the external world of perception is perceived directly and immediately, without the intervention of any *tertium quid*. Reality is not something that lies hidden for ever from our view, behind the thick screen of ideas, with which alone we have the privilege to come in direct contact; on the other hand, these ideas themselves are all the reality so far as our external perceptions are concerned. Reality, in other words, lies in the ideas themselves as directly perceived by us and is not as alleged by some philosophers something of which our ideas are mere representations or copies.

The Representative Perception Theory.

Locke and Descartes, on the contrary, had advocated, as the reader is already aware by this time, what is known as the mediate or the representative perception theory, according to which the mind is in immediate contact only with the ideas which are *not* themselves the ultimate reality but are only the representations or *copies* of the real things. According to Locke's theory of representative perception, therefore, there are

involved in every act of perception three distinct elements: (i) the percipient self; (ii) the ideas with which alone the percipient comes in direct or immediate contact; (iii) and thirdly, the 'real' material things which are known not immediately but only mediately through the ideas which copy them.

Changes introduced by Berkeley in the above theory.

Now, all that Berkeley does to this theory of immediate perception is to eliminate the last of the three elements, involved according to Locke, in each act of external perception. He rejects the unknown material substratum of Locke, and assigns reality—of course, a reality that is relative to perception—to the ideas themselves. It should be noted that Locke too had admitted the direct immediateness of the relation between the mind and its ideas. Berkeley only eliminates the last element, assigns reality to the ideas, and thus arrives at the conclusion that reality is immediately or directly perceived.[1] This

1. Berkeley is, however, compelled to admit in place of the exploded *material* substratum of our ideas, another *spiritual* one, which on his own admission is *not* immediately perceived by us. So far, then, Berkeley's theory, equally with Locke's, is not, as usually alleged, an immediate perception theory, but only one that describes our perception of the true reality as *mediate* and our ideas as representative of the true unperceived reality lying behind them. For a critical examination of the worth of the Berkeleyan substitute see *supra* Bk. II, chap. I.

is in brief Berkeley's theory of immediate perception.[1]

this theory of immediate perception as maintained by Berkeley commits, however, as Johnston clearly points out, two serious mistakes. "Berkeley's theory of sense-perception" he remarks, "suffers both from over-simplification and from lack of discriminative analysis."[2] Having shown that Locke's theory of representative perception can not stand the test of criticism, Berkeley, led by his zeal for simplification merely eliminates the material element in Locke's theory, without waiting to consider as to how far a

Berkeley, however, commits the mistake of over-simplification.

1. Reid too in later days critised the theory of representative perception as maintained by Locke, but in quite a different direction. In stead of eliminating Locke's third element (the material substratum), as Berkeley did, he discarded Locke's second element (the ideas), and thus maintained in effect that we come in direct contact with the real external reality without the intervention of the ideas. The student should note that while both Reid and Berkeley maintain that we come in immediate contact with the external reality, they differ diametrically on the question of what that reality is.

2. *Vide, Development of Berkeley's Philosophy* p. 150-52

mere destructive criticism like this would be adequate without a suitable positive supplement. Simplification by itself cannot be a special virtue of any theory if it fails to explain the facts satisfactorily.

And fails to analyse critically the act of perception.

But what is a more serious defect, Berkeley fails to analyse critically the psychological act of perception. He identifies sensation with the things sensed, and omits to note the most important fact that the essential nature of sensations or ideas as he calls them must be 'presentative'. They must present something. It may be that Locke was wrong in holding that the ideas are *exact copies* of the external things, but then to cut entirely all reference of ideas to external material reality, as Berkeley does, is also hardly tenable. *Some* reference to such external reality appears quite indispensable. Berkeley's elimination of the material element from our acts of external perception is declared by modern psychology as erroneous and unwarranted. It is now held that all such attempt at oversimplification really runs counter to our clearest consciousness in each act of external perception. We are invariably conscious, it is argued in refutation of Berkeley's theory of immediate perception, of some external material substance existing independently of our perception each time we cognise an object in our waking

normal life; and that the limitation of reality to the sensations caused in us by the external objects is therefore neither warranted by facts nor supported by reason.[1]

Berkeley's criticism of the representaive perception theory.

The arguments that Berkeley advances against the theory of representative perception as maintained by Locke and Descartes are chiefly two in number. In the first place, he argues that the statement that an idea is a *copy* of a material *thing* is unmeaning and impossible, because 'an idea can be like nothing but an idea; a colour or figure can be like nothing but another colour or figure'. Ideas, then, can not resemble any material things. Further, either the original things are perceived or not perceived. If perceived, they are but ideas and the point is gained; if not perceived, how absurd is it to say that a colour is like something that is invisible, or a sound like something that is inaudible, and so on ? [2]

The second strong argument advanced by Berkeley against the Lockian theory of perception is that according to the theory of Locke himself it is impossible to compare the idea and the thing, the copy and the original. If we are for ever confined

1. See further in this connection, *supra* Book II, chap I.

2. *Vide*, *Principles* s. 8.

within the narrow circle of our ideas, and if we never do come in immediate contact with the assumed ultimate reality, how can *we* ever know that the perceived ideas agree with the unperceived things? Both the arguments of Berkeley are strong and weigh much against the theory of representative perception as maintained by Locke and Descartes.

CHAPTER V.

THE NATURE OF IDEAS.

The dualism between an idea and a spirit is in truth one of the most important points in the philosophy of Berkeley—one of those round which his entire philosophy turns. Ideas are inactive; spirits are active. The *esse* of ideas is *percipi*; that of spirits is *percipere*. Ideas thus exist only while being *perceived* by spirits; spirits exist strictly only while *perceiving* ideas. Several important consequences follow. Ideas have no real existence *per se*; spirits do have it. No idea can ever be a cause, because causality implies power, implies i. e. activity. A finite spirit, on the contrary, can be a cause in a limited sense, the Infinite Spirit in the real and ultimate sense. 'Matter' as such is nothing beyond inert ideas, the spirit is not the same as its ideas. I am conscious, says Berkeley, that I am not the same as my ideas which I perceive. Later on Hume reduced even the spirit to mere ideas, and then the whole universe was dissolved.

Spirits *versus* Ideas.

To understand fully the nature of ideas in the philosophy of Berkeley, it is better to regard them from six important standpoints, one of which—viz

their contrast with the spirits–has been already explained just above. While the spirits are active., ideas are inert and powerless. Passive *percipi* is the *esse* of ideas, active will that of the spirits. Hence 'no *idea*, according to Berkeley, can be like a *spirit*.'

To Locke, as we have already seen in a previous chapter, the term 'ideas' stood for all the objects of thought whatsoever, and not for any particular class of these. He however, divided these ideas into those of sensation and those of reflection. Now, Berkeley accepts the latter half of Locke's usage, while he denies the former, because according to him ideas are not the only objects of thought, there being 'notions' besides them. He however agrees with Locke in subdividing ideas into those of sensation ("actually imprinted on the senses"); those of reflection ("perceived by attending to the passions and operations of the mind"); and those called complex ideas ("formed by help of memory and imagination"). Hume later on changed this usage, and restricted the term 'ideas' only to Locke's 'ideas of reflection'. To the latter's 'ideas'—meaning *all* objects of thought—he gave the name 'perceptions'; and then divided these 'perceptions' into 'impressions' (Locke's ideas of sensation) and 'ideas' (Locke's ideas of reflection).

Ideas as including the products of sensation as well as reflection.

There is a very important difference between the meaning and nature of ideas in Locke and Berkeley on the one hand, and Hume on the other. To Hume, an idea was a mere idea, one complete in itself, an isolated entity implying in itself absolutely no relation to any other thing in this universe. It did not imply even any cause for it. Hume did not believe in the necessity of the axiom of causality,—that 'every event must have a cause'. To him no external cause is implied in the nature of any idea. To Berkeley and Locke, on the contrary, an idea can never be a mere idea. It *must* always imply in its very nature some external cause for itself. No thing can come into existence without a cause. Locke and Berkeley however hold different views regarding the nature of this external cause of our ideas. While with the former the external cause implied in the very nature of every idea of external perception is some external inert unknown *material* substance, with Berkeley it is some Divine *spiritual* one. To Hume, then, every idea is itself and nothing beyond itself. To Locke, and Berkeley, on the other hand, an idea is never only itself, but always 'itself as implying some external cause'. Hume may therefore be rightly charged with having reduced things to *mere* ideas; Berkeley only with "changing things into ideas as implying an external cause other than 'matter'."

Ideas as implying an external cause.

Another very important point in the Berkeleyan conception of ideas, is that these are held by him *ex hypothesi*, to be capable of being transformed into mental pictures. Here Berkeley differs widely from Locke who does not confine the term 'idea' to mere sensous percepts and mental images. The reader will remember that it was this same important difference that formed the basis of the celebrated attack of Berkeley on Locke's doctrine of Abstract Ideas. While the latter includes under 'ideas' the universal concepts of reason, Berkeley excludes them. All ideas are assumed by him to be particular; and if you can not form the mental picture of any object of thought, it is, according to him, no more an 'idea' at all. Hence, 'an abstract or general idea is a contradiction in terms.' In thus confining the use of the term 'ideas' only to 'sensuous percepts and mental images', Berkeley's usage resembles that of Hume, though it is opposed to that of Locke.

Ideas confined to mentally picturable objects.

No idea, with the author of the *Principles*, has any real external existence independent of perception, as its very *esse* is declared to be comprised in its *percipi*. All things are reduced to ideas without any material element in them. A thing is nothing apart from its qualities which, further, are nothing but ideas. An orange, for

Ideas have no real independent existence.

instance, is, on this theroy, nothing besides a group of certain ideas of colour, shape, size and the like brought together. And do not all ideas have only an existence that is relative to the perceiving mind? Thus it follows that all things exist only "in the mind". Ideas with Brekeley are no more the copies of external material things, as they are with Locke. The moment all perception of the ideas on the part of the spirits ceases, they pass out of existence, and with them vanish too the beauitful things that are supposed to exist independently of us.

Berkeley is said to have reduced the doctrine of causality to a doctrine of signs. This statement is certainly true, if it is taken to refer to the causality of things, but not if extended to that of the spirits.

Ideas as Signs.

In regard to things it is no doubt true that Berkeley denied any causality to them, since according to him all things are ideas, which, being inert, possess no activity. No thing (or idea in the Berkeleyan sense) can be a cause of any other thing; only a spirit possesses activity, can produce an idea, and can thus be a cause. When in the ordinary speech we say that an idea A is the cause of the idea B, what this really means is only that the idea A will be followed by the idea B; in other words, that the idea A is the *sign* of the idea B. In this sense no

necessity is implied in the nature of any idea. No idea implies any necessary relation to any other idea.

But, though not to any other *idea*, every idea does in Berkeley's philosophy, imply a relation to some spirit—to the finite spirit in a limited sense, to the Infinite Spirit in the real ultimate sense. This is already explained in the third point above. Every idea implies the Infinite Spirit as its cause. True causality rests only there and nowhere else. Hence Berkeley has *not* reduced the doctrine of causality to a mere doctrine of signs, if this statement refers to the causality of spirits.

We have thus discussed fully the nature of ideas in the philosophy of Berkeley, from the above mentioned six points of view. There now remains one more point the importance of which, however, demands a special treatment. We shall now turn to its consideration.

The problem of the objectivity of ideas.

In answer to a charge that often used to be urged against the *Principles of Human Knowledge* even during the lifetime of its renowned author, that it dissolved all things in the *rerum natura* into mere ideas in the mind, Berkeley has introduced in the *Dialogues* a peculiar paradoxical exclamation that deserves a separate and a detailed consideration at

our hands, as it has an important bearing on our present discussion of the nature of the Berkeleyan ideas. "I am not changing *things* into *ideas*," he writes in the *Dialogues*, "but rather *ideas* into *things*." Appearing as it does at once a very peculiar sentence and one that contradicts the central theme of his philosophy itself, it is certainly worth our while to examine it carefully, and see whether it contains some hidden meaning or is a mere worthless piece of empty rhetoric that would do credit only to a wordmonger.

"I am not changing THINGS into IDEAS but rather IDEAS into THINGS."

In the early years of the publication of his philosophical treatises, it was charged, *inter alia*, that Berkeley's motives in writing his books were mere "vanity and love of paradox," which as we might all expect he vehemently disclaimed. But, indeed, it appears not a little paradoxical, that a philosopher whose central theme and main discovery consisted in proving that all things of our experience are nothing apart from clusters of ideas in us, whose *esse* is their *percipi*—that such a one should claim that he is not changing *things* into *ideas*, but rather *ideas* into *things*. What has Berkeley done if he has not dissolved all material things into ideas? And yet, the above quotation may possibly be seen to contain some very important aspect of the Ber-

keleyan Idealism, if we study it patiently in the light of its proper content and from the viewpoint from which its author regarded it.

Berkeley introduces the above paradoxical utterance in his famous *Dialogues*, and *means to stress thereby the objectivity of the ideas into which he dissolves all things*. It is true that he vehemently protested against any assumption of an inert material 'substratum' underlying the things of our experience; true, also, that he strongly maintained that thing is nothing apart from particular sensible qualities which are, in their turn, but ideas in us caused by God, depending for their existence entirely upon their being perceived by some spirit. In this sense, no doubt, he must be said to have changed the things into ideas.

Berkeley's meaning of the term 'Idea' in the above quotation.

But the word 'idea', like the other important terms in philosophy, is most ambiguous and connotes various different meanings. Plato, Descartes, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Kant and others—each of these employed this term in his own peculiar sense different from those of the others. In fact, even Berkeley himself uses it in at least two quite different senses in his own philosophy. When, therefore, Berkeley is said to have changed the things of our experience into

'ideas', the chief question still remains: what is the nature of these Berkeleyan 'ideas'?

Now, when Berkeley disclaims that he is changing things into *ideas*, he is using the term 'idea' in a special restricted sense—one in which, however, it is ordinarily understood in common parlance. The ordinary man opposes an 'idea' to a 'thing', and assigns to the former only a subjective existence, while the latter is favoured with an objective one. The idea of a horse differs from the actual quadruped in this, that, while the latter exists as well for one man as for others, the particular idea has existence only for that man in whose mind it appears. In other words, 'ideas' in this sense, are private to each individual and are mere subjective modifications.

It is in this sense that we must interpret Berkeley's refusal of the forementioned charge that his philosophy changes all things into mere ideas in our minds. He wishes to maintain, in the above quotation, that his 'ideas' are *not* subjective modifications, have, that is, not a mere subjective but an objective and universal existence. The mountains and the rivers I see before me, he admits freely, exist not only for me but for others too. Once I open my eyes, it does not depend on my will to see *them* or not. They have thus an existence that is

technically termed objective. How does, then, Berkeley say that the ideas exist 'in the mind'? They exist 'in the mind,' according to Berkeley, "not by way of *mode* or *attribute*, but only by way of *idea*".[1] And again, "when I speak of objects as existing in the mind, or imprinted on the senses, I would not be understood in the gross literal sense; as when bodies are said to exist in a place, or a seal to make an impression upon wax. My meaning is only that the mind comprehends or perceives them".[2] What Berkeley wants to stress in his "Idealistic" philosophy, is, then, chiefly the fact that the mind bears to the things perceived a subject-object relationship; and further that apart from such relation no 'things' can exist.[3]

The view that the nature of Berkeleyan ideas is not subjective but objective finds a further support in the fact that Berkeley regards God as the

1. *Principles* s. 49.

2. *Dialogues*.

3. "It is always to be remembered", writes Fraser, "that the ideas or phenomena of which things are composed, according to Berkeleyan conception, are not, as with Fichte, modifications of the mind to which they are represented, but are, on the contrary, perception-dependent persentations, exibited under "laws of nature", in individual minds. We are not so related (to the world of experience) as that we become what we perceive, or that what we perceive becomes part of us". *Berkeley*, pp. 80-81.

immediate cause of all the 'ideas' that we perceive. They are independent of the will of the individual percipient self. Now the nature of the self or subject is centred, according to Berkeley, in the will. The 'ideas', then, as falling outside the region of the subject's own will are not subjective.

We have so far discussed the negative part of the above quotation from Berkeley, and have shown how Berkeley can legitimately deny that he has changed all things into 'ideas' provided, of course, that we interpret the term 'ideas' in accordance with the ordianry common-sense meaning, as equivalent to mere subjective modifications. On his principles, he maintains, nothing that is real is lost; only an unreal repugnant abstract notion of matter has been removed.

But what can Berkeley mean by the latter part of the above paradoxical statement in which he maintains that his philosophy has not really disolved the things into ideas, but has rather *changed the ideas into things?* This, however, is not very difficult to understand in the light of our above discussion. According to philosophers like Locke and others each act of perception involves three distinct elements: the percipient self; the external thing perceived, which has an objective existence; and lastly,

How does he change *ideas* into *things?*

the ideas which are caused in each percipient self by the external thing and which, being private to each man, have only a subjective sort of existence. Now, Berkeley denied altogether the second of these three elements. An unperceived thing was, for him, a manifest contradiction. But though reality was denied to any 'matter' beyond the ideas we have, Berkeley did not thereby deny all reality whatsoever, and was certainly far from maintaing that all perception is but an illusion. *He transferred the reality from the things to the 'ideas'*. He refused to believe in anything beyond what we are immediately conscious of, while what we immediately perceive are all but 'ideas'. 'Ideas' then were granted the reality which others conferred upon the supposed material things. With reality came objectivity; and Berkeley granted to the 'ideas' that objectivity which was formerly supposed to lie with the 'things'. It is thus that Berkeley conferred upon the 'ideas' the qualifications that were formerly said to be possessed by the 'things', except the supposed independent absolute existence apart from all perception. In this sense Berkeley maintains that he has rather changed 'ideas' into 'things', and not 'things' into 'ideas'.

A mere difference of words apart, Berkeley's whole philosophy may thus be summed up: that all the world of experience, the whole choir of heaven

and furniture of earth, is ultimately spirit-dependent, and has no reality apart from the object-subject relation it bears towards the spirit; but in maintaining that all things depend upon perception by some spirit, it is not meant that they are mere subjective modifications of a finite spirit; it being, on the contrary, maintained that they have an objective universal existence. The above quotation is but a cryptic expression of this important conclusion.

We have so far discussed in detail the meaning and interpretation of the above important quotation. It is a question, however, whether Berkeley maintains consistently this view of the objectivity of the ideas. If all the ideas that we perceive are really objective, and if by ideas existing in the mind of a percipient is meant only that they bear an object-subject relationship towards the self, only, that is, that they are perceived by the subject;—if all this is really the gist of the Berkeleyan philosophy, it is difficult to explain why he should hesitate to maintain the absolute numerical identity of a thing perceived simultaneously by more than one man; for the very *same* idea can certainly, it would seem, bear a simultaneous objective relation to more than one percipient subject. Berkeley himself, however, dissolved all sameness in things to mere similarity. If, when ten men see the moon,

Berkeley does not maintain consistently the objectivity of ideas.

they are said to perceive ten *different* moons and not one and the *same* moon, is this not tantamount to saying that the idea of the moon as perceived by each percipient is but a subjective modification within himself and has no such objective existence as Berkeley would claim for it in the above quotation? For, had it really been an objective universal entity, what necessity was there for maintaining that the moon as perceived by each individual mind is but a private possession of its own, and that any other percipient can at best enjoy the sight of only another *numerically different* though otherwise exactly similar moon and not rather of the very *same* one ?[1]

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1. For a detailed consideration of the entire problem, *vide infra* Bk. IV chap. I.

BOOK III.

THE PROBLEM OF SPIRITS.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER I.

THE SELF.

Among the philosophers of the modern age, Descartes is unanimously recognised as the founder of modern European philosophy. Alike through his peculiar method as well as his rigorously drawn conclusions, he influenced the entire subsequent course of European philosophy to a degree rarely paralleled in the entire history of metaphysical speculations. At the time when Descartes entered the field, the world of philosophical thought was full of unwarranted assumptions, unreasoned beliefs, uncritical dogmas and hazy notions concerning philosophical problems. Authority weighed too much with the philosophers of that age and independent thought was denied a free scope.

1. The Development of the concept of self from Descartes to Hume.

It was Rene Descartes, the famous French philosopher, who attempted to free philosophical thought from all this bondage and slavery. His wonderful method has the credit of having stimulated independent thinking. Descartes refused to assume anything uncritically, or believe in anything unless convinced

Descartes' new method.

by reason of its necessity. He thus began his philosophy by doubting everything. The schoolmen before him had urged *'credo-ut intelligam'* to which Descartes rejoined *'dubito ut intelligam'*. Doubt everything and thus you will reach fundamental truths, he said.

But when Descartes pursued rigorously this novel methed of doubting, he found that ultimately he had to arrive at a position where he could doubt no further. He began by doubting everything including his own body and his senses. Who knows, asked Descartes, possibly all that we perceive is but an unreal illusion, and the senses nothing but instruments of deception ?

Cogito ergo sum.

When he arrived at the existence of his own self, however, Descartes found that he had to stop there. He could no more doubt *his own* existence, the fact that the conscious spiritual principle within him was really existing, because the very doubt implies a doubter.[1] If I doubt my own existence who is it that doubts ? I can no more doubt myself than a dumb man complain orally that he is dumb.

1. cf. Shankaracharya : आत्मनश्च प्रत्याख्यातुमशक्यत्वात्, य एव निराकर्ता तस्यैवात्मत्वात्" (*Brahma-sutras* I, i, 4). ("It is impossible to deny the existence of one's own self, due to the selfhood of the very man who attempts to refute it".)

This ultimate principle of self-existence which he was thus compelled to believe in, Descartes expressed in his famous formula, *'Je pense donc je suis'* or as it is more popularly known, *' Cogito ergo sum '* (I think – i. e. I am conscious - therefore I exist). I cannot doubt my own existence because doubting itself is thinking and all thinking must involve a thinker.

Now, two things must be carefully noted in explaining the meaning and significance of this formula. Firstly, by *cogito* or thinking Descartes does not mean thinking in the narrower sense of the word, but rather in the widest sense of consciousness in general. What he is emphasizing here is, in truth, the central fact of self-consciousness. I am conscious of my own existence and hence it is beyond any doubt or question. The second and more important (more debatable, too,) fact concerning the above historic expression is that it does *not* involve, as alleged very often, any process of *inference*. It has often been thought that the word *'ergo'* ('therefore') indicates that the conclusion 'I exist' is reached as a result of inference from the premise 'I think'. But moderm critics of fame and learning now agree that Descartes' *'Corgito ergo sum'* is *not* an inference; else, if taken as an inference it will be a case of the fallacy of *Petitio Principii*[1] the major premise 'I

1. This logical fallacy consists in assuming previously what is to be proved in the conclusion.

think' itself presupposing the conclusion 'I exist'. How can I think unless I already exist? thinking then cannot *prove* existence but itself presupposes it.

The fact is that it is a self-evident analytical proposition and means, as Weber correctly points out in his history of philosophy, not 'I think *therefore* I exist', but only 'I think *and* I exist', or better 'I am conscious of existing.' What Descartes emphasized, and all the philosophers and psychologists since his oge emphasize is really, as remarked above, the central fact of self-consciousness rather than any thing else.

Descartes' application of the above principle.

I am conscious of my own existence; here, then, is a sure impregnable foundation on which might be built safely the entire subsequent structure of metaphysical conclusions. But how to proceed from this isolated fact of self existence and arrive at conclusions regarding the world and God? Now, I am conscious i. e. have ideas, and among my ideas I find one clear and distinct idea which I am not conscious of having created myself. This is the idea of the Infinite God. And since, further, a finite spirit cannot create an infinite idea, God himself must have put the idea there in my mind. But God must first exist before He can put any such idea in our minds. The existence of the Divine Being is

thus established from that of our own self. Having arrived at this conclusion Descartes' task is now very easy. All the sensations received by me, all this external world, must be real and can no more be doubted, because the Infinite, Omnipotent, Almighty God, in endowing me with senses and ideas, cannot be said to have deceived me.[1] The existence of the world is thus fully established along with that of the self and God, and the former provisional scepticism comes to an end.

It should be carefully marked how in all this application of his fundamental principle, Descartes assumes throughout the principle of causality, or rather the principle that every event must have an adequate cause. In saying that the finite spirit could not have created the idea of the Infinite Being, Descartes clearly applied this very principle.

The principle as applied by subsquent philosophers. Locke.

The principle expressed by Descartes in the well-known form '*Cogito ergo sum*', soon became the established starting point of all modern philosophy, and was unquestionably accepted for a long time by almost all the philosophers since the publication of his philosophy. In passing from the hands of one philosopher to another how-

1. As any such deception would emply a want of good ness and hence an imperfection.

ever it underwent certain minor modifications which we shall do well to note here in some detail.

Locke followed Descartes closely in maintaining that the self is conscious of its own existence. The knowledge of the self,according to Locke, is 'intuitive', of God 'demonstrative' and of the world 'sensitive'.[1] The 'idea' of self accompanies every act of sensation and perception; and its existence is intuitively and immediately known.

But, while Locke thus accepts the central Cartesian doctrine of the intuitive knowledge of the self existence, he differs a little as to the character of the self thus known. With Descartes, thinking is the essence of the soul as extension of body. Locke, however, denied that the soul thinks always.[2]

1. " I say then, that we have the knowledge of *our own existence* by intuition; of the *existence of God* by demonstration; and of other things by sensation." *Essay, IV, iv,* 2.

2. " I confess myself to have one of those dull souls that doth not perceive itself always to contemplate ideas; nor can conceive it any more necessary for the soul always to think, than for the body always to move ; the perception of ideas being, as I conceive, to the soul what motion is to the body, not its essence, but one of its operations. And, therefore, though thinking be supposed never so much the proper action of the soul, yet it is not necessary to suppose that it should be always in action."—*Essay. II, i,* 10. See also *II, xix,* 4.

"Every drowsy nod shakes their doctrine, who teach that the soul is always thinking".[1] Thinking, then, is not the essence of the soul, but only an accident of it. Now, the fact is that Locke identified thinking with *conscious* thinking. it is of course obvious that the self does not always think *consciously* But Locke paid little attention to the processes of *subconscious* thinking so completely explored by psychologists since Locke wrote his famous *Essay.*

Again, with Descartes the self-the 'I think'–was a spiritual substance having thought as its essence; Locke on the other hand was not quite sure whether the soul is a spiritual or a material substance, and he did not definitely commit himself on that point.[2] With Locke, the soul is merely an unknown-some-

1. *Essay,* II, ii, 13.

2. " We have the ideas of matter and thinking, " writes Locke, " but possibly shall never be able to know whether any mere material being thinks or no; it being impossible for us, by the contemplation of our own ideas without revelation, to discover whether Omnipotency has not given to some systems of matter, fitly disposed, a power to perceive and think, or else joined and fixed to matter, so disposed, a thinking immaterial substance : it being, in respect of our notions, not much more remote from our comprehension to conceive that God can, if he pleases, superadd to matter a faculty of thinking, than that he should superadd to it another substance with a faculty of thinking." —*Essay* IV, iii, 6.

thing I know not what-substratum of the ideas that we have within us, as matter is with him an unknown substratum of the qualities that we see without. Locke believed further that the soul is originally a *tabula rasa*, 'a blank tablet', 'an empty cabinet', 'a dark room' with only two windows to let the light in–sensation and reflexion. To Descartes, the soul was not originally a *'tabula rasa'* in the extreme sense in which Locke used it.

Berkeley occupies in the history of the English Empirical philosophy a position intermediary between Locke and Hume. Both Berkeley and Hume borrow much —though not exactly the same points—from Locke and ultimately from Descartes. Berkeley believes with Locke that we have an intuitive knowledge of the self. The fact of self–consciousness is stressed by him as much as by Locke; but while the former believed with Descartes that the soul always thinks,[1] the latter did not. The soul ceases to think only when it ceases to exist. Berkeley, however, stresses the conative or the willing aspect of the

Berkeley.

1. " It follows that the duration of any finite spirit must be estimated by the number of ideas or actions succeeding each other in that same spirit or mind. Hence it is a plain consequence that *the soul always thinks*, and in truth whoever shall go about to divide in his thoughts, or abstract the *existence* of a spirit from its *cogitation*, will, I believe, find it no easy task. " *Principles*, s. 98.

self more than the cognitive or the knowing aspect. The essence of the spirit is not so much knowing as activity, not so much passive perception as active will.

Berkeley criticises the Cartesian formula *'Cogito ergo sum'* as being a tautology. Sergeant too criticises it in a similar adverse tone. But it appears that the criticisms of both are based upon a misapprehension. It is true that if the famous Cartesian formula is interpreted as an inference, it will not stand the test of criticism. It should not, however, as maintained above, be taken as an inference, but only as a self–evident analytical proposition. It will then appear that the difference between Berkeley and Descartes is more a matter of words than sense. Both place the ultimate emphasis in the direct immediate self–consciousness that each of us experiences within himself.

After Berkeley comes Hume, that famous sceptic of Scotland. To him, the self was nothing but a bundle of perceptions, a cluster of ideas in perpetual flux. Now, it should be noted that though radically opposed to Descartes Locke and Berkeley, in his view of the nature of the self, Hume did not deny explicitely the Cartesian formula of ***'cogito ergo sum'***. He too admitted that I am conscious of ***my own*** existence;

David Hume.

but raised issue concerning the nature of this 'I' that is thus alleged to be intuitively known. All that can ever be perceived within is merely a series of individual perceptions, and nothing besides. Hence the 'I' is not, as with Berkeley it was, some spiritual conscious indivisible principle *different from its ideas or perceptions*; it must rather be completely identified with these particular perceptions themselves.

With Hume's radical views, philosophy came to a stumbling block, and could not proceed any further before the basic assumptions on which it rested since Descartes were themselves removed. It was given to Immanuel Kant to attempt this reform, and the centre of philosophical speculations was shifted from England to Germany.

II. Berkeley's account of the self critically discussed.

One of the most important objects of the metaphysician's study is his own petty self. Endless controversies have raged round the nature of this self. Of what use is it, if a philosopher were to give a full account of the entire external world of perception, of its origin and nature, but fail to understand adequately the petty self within his own body, 'the small man within' himself ? The self has presented in all ages and in all countries persistent difficulties to the speculative mind of

man. It has been for ever an enigma. The account of the self has, in fact, become one of the crucial tests of philosophical systems. Some identify the self with the body and deny any spiritual entity apart from the gross physical bodies perceived by our senses; others call it a fine modification of matter; a third system describes it in terms of 'animal spirits'; while a fourth believes it to be nothing apart from the states of consciousness; some there also have been who recognize in it a simple individual spiritual substance distinct from its creator, the God; while philosophers in India are famous for their identification of the finite self with the Infinite Divine Spirit. Further, besides this maze of endless theories concerning the nature of our self the fact that, the self being by nature incapable of immediate sense-experience, no such theory can be directly verified or disproved, has increased the difficulties of the matter still more.

Different theories regarding the self.

Now to come to our proper subject, Berkeley advocated the last but one of the various theories mentioned above. He believed that the self is some one 'simple, indivisible, incorporeal, unextended, spiritual substance', and is, by nature, the exact contradictory of the inert ideas that we perceive in this world. The *esse* of the ideas is

The Berkeleyan account of the self.

passive *percipi*, while of the self active will. No ideas can ever be a real cause; the self can be a cause though in a limited sense. A thing of perception is really no more than the ideas we perceive; the self, on the contrary, is "a real thing which is neither an idea nor like an idea, but that which perceives ideas, and wills, and reasons about them".[1] Berkeley is quite emphatic on this point. Hume, on the contrary, tried to prove that the self is nothing apart from a congeries of fleeting perceptions, and that the feeling of *one* self within us is nothing short of an empty illusion generated by the quick succession of the perishing momentary ideas (or perceptions, in the language of Hume) within us. Berkeley had already guarded himself strongly against any such development of his philosophy. "How often must I repeat," remarks Berkeley in the *Dialogues*, "that I am conscious of my own being; and that *I myself* am not my ideas, but somewhat else—a thinking, active principle that perceives, knows, wills, and operates about ideas. I know that I, one and the same self, perceive both colours and sounds: that a colour can not perceive a sound, nor a sound a colour: that I am therefore one individual principle, distinct from colour and sound; and for the same reason, from all other sensible things and inert ideas".[2]

1. *Principles*, s. 139.

2. *Dialogues*. (*Selections* p. 163) Berkeley believed in

Berkeley's principle that we are immediately conscious of the existence of our own self is borrowed by him from Locke, and is ultimately Cartesian in origin. While we come to have the knowledge of other finite spirits and the Infinite Spirit only mediately and through analogical inference, the knowledge of our own self, according to this account, is the result of direct and immediate intuition. '*Cogito ergo sum*' was the principle of Descartes, and it was accepted with slight modifications by his successors in the world of philosophical speculations, including the English philosophers Locke and Berkeley.[1]

One more important point that is worthy of note in the Berkeleyan account of our own self is his insistence on the conative attitude of the self. The essence of a spirit is its activity. "All the thinking objects of the mind" writes Berkeley "agree in that they are entirely passive and their existence consists only in being perceived; whereas a soul or spirit is an active being, whose existence consists, not in being perceived, but in perceiving ideas and thinking."[2] The self is im-

consequence that we have not an *idea* but only a *notion* of the self and other spirits.

1. Berkeley differed slightly from Locke in believing that the soul always thinks.

2. *Principles* s 139.

mediately conscious of its own activity in three respects –(i) in causing its own mental images; (ii) in causing certain limited motions in its own body; (iii) and lastly, in causing limited motions in external idea–things of perception, including the bodies of other finite spirits. It is true that the self, as a finite spirit, is passive to a certain extent; but its essence consists properly not in its passive aspect but in its active one. "Substance of a spirit" declares Berkeley emphatically, "is that, it acts, causes, wills, operates".[1] The identity of the self consists, according to him, not in passive perception of the ideas, but in active will. "It is willing then, rather than knowing" remarks Johnston while summing up Berkeley's position in this respect, "that constitutes personal identity. Berkeley answers in the affirmative the question which he asks himself, 'whether identity of person consists not in the will ?' The ultimate unity of personality resides in the will."[2]

This, in brief, is Berkeley's account of the self. There are five chief points in this account that the reader should do well to keep in mind; (i) that we are immediately conscious of our own self, while mediately of other selves; (ii) that the self is not an idea or ideas but a simple indivisible spiritual

1, *Common Place Book*. i. 53.

2. *Development of Berkeley's Philosophy*, p. 201.

substance that perceives ideas and is hence distinct from them; (iii) that the self always thinks; (iv) that the essence of the self is its activity; (v) and lastly that we can not have an *id·a* of the self but a 'notion.' Let us now discuss some of the salient points in this Berkeleyan conception of the self in the light of modern psychology.

Some points in the Berkeleyan account accepted by modern psychology.

One of the chief points in Berkeley's account of our own self that has special importance in view of the subsequent development of the English Empirical philosophy, is his emphatic statement that the self is an entity distinct from all the ideas that it has experience of. It is well known that David Hume, the Scottish Sceptic who came after Berkeley, attempting to apply the latter's arguments against the material substance to the spiritual substance itself, refused to recognise any separate self apart from the ideas or perceptions it has. "For my part," says Hume, "when I enter most intimately into what I call *myself*, I always stumble upon some particular perception or other–of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch *myself* without a perception, and never can observe anything but the perception." The self, according to this view, is nothing but its ideas, the perceiver is the same as the

(i) The self is distinct from all its ideas.

ideas it perceives, the thinker the thoughts that it thinks. Berkeley, though a follower of this doctrine in his early life, repudiated it in clearest terms in his later philosophy.

Systems in philosophy, as in politics, however absurd, seldom lack at least some followers to defend and propound them. The above Humian theory of the identity of the self and its perceptions, though refuted again and again since its publication, (nay, even before its auther had published it–by Berkeley - for example,) has nevertheless found an able exponent in modern days in the famous psychologist William James. " If the passing thought " declares James, " be the directly verifiable existent, which no school has hitherto doubted it to be, then that thought is itself the thinker and psychology need not look beyond ". The position that James accepts in this quotation is not very different from that which Hume accepted years before in his celebrated sceptical philosophy. It is true that James expressly uses the word ' psychology ' in the above sentence, throwing thereby a vague suggestion that metaphysics *may* maintain the existence of a separate self apart from its thoughts; but the question still remains as to whether even the psychologist can conveniently dispense with the self, or, in other words, whether a psychology without a self is possible. And if we find that even a psychology is impossible without

postulating the independent existence of the self as an entity distinct from all its ideas, it is obvious that metaphysics will be still more impossible under such a condition.

Now, if we are to abide by the opinions of leading modern psychologists, it seems plain that the assumption of an independent subject of experience, the knower of all knowledge, the perceiver of all that is perceived, is absolutely essential for psychology. James Ward, the famous English psychologist[1] of modern days, has strongly repudiated the above view of James,[2] and maintained that

1. Whose article on 'psychology' in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* which has also been separately printed in the book '*Psychological Principles*', is unanimously recognised as an authority on psychological questions.

2. According to the view of Hume and James it follows that the 'thoughts', or 'perceptions' (in Hume's language), or 'ideas' (in Berkeley's language), are aware of themselves. Ward criticises this view strongly and characterising it as 'a contradiction, a paradox', adds that in no act can the subject or the agent and the object be the same; it is absurd to think that the known and the knower can ever be the same in the same sense in the same act of knowledge. Shankaracharya thus criticises this view (propounded in India by the *Vidnyanvadin* Bauddha philosophers) :

"विज्ञानंप्रकाशात्मकत्वात्प्रदीपवत्स्वयमेवानुभूयते.....इति चेत । अत्यंत विरुद्धा स्वात्मनि क्रियामभ्युपगच्छत्यग्निरात्मानंदहतीतिवत् । "

(*Brahma-sutras* II, ii, 28) [If you were to maintain

'psychology without a self is impossible, i. e. without a being which, in its acquaintance and intercourse with objects, feels and acts', and adds that 'the character of the self may be variously interpreted; its actuality can not be doubted.' Referring to those psychologists who avoid the assumption of any self or subject apart from the perceptions, Ward remarks, 'if a psychologist says merely there are such and such presentations and ideas, he is meaningless; he must say such and such *individual has* such presentations or feels thus etc.' "Psychology" writes prof. Stout, "is concerned with modes of consciousness as connected within the unity of consciousness, but we have been unable to speak of modes of consciousness and their unity without reference to a conscious individual, a mind or self which owns them, and which we name whenever we use the personal pronoun 'I'."[1] 'Everything experienced' to conclude the discussion in the words of Ward, 'is referred to a self experiencing. This is what is meant by pure Ego or Subject. It is something more than the

that an idea cognises itself (i. e. has no need of an independent self to cognise it), because of its luminous nature like a lamp,—(we reply that) you would thereby commit the great absurdity of maintaining that a thing can be the object of its own activity, and that your above statement would consequently be like the (absurd) statement that fire burns itself]. (Vide also *Brahma-sutras* III, iii, 54).

1. *Manual of Psychology*, pp. 15-16 (Fourth Edition).

unity of the contents of consciousness. Consciousness is more than the sum-total of the contents of consciousness.' In his recognition of a conscious subject distinct from the ideas it experiences, then, Berkeley receives adequate support from modern psychology. In fact, Hume himself could not avoid that assumption, though he rejected it explicitely;[1] and his attempt in this respect has been characterised as a grand failure.

A minor point in which Berkeley is undoubtedly correct may here be mentioned in passing. If we properly take into consideration his meanings of such terms as 'idea' and 'notion', it is not difficult to admit the validity of his statement that 'we have no idea of the self but a notion.' By 'ideas' he meant only sensuous percepts and mental images. Now, no one ever maintained that we have a sensuous perception or a mental image of our own self. Hume was not wrong when he maintained that in his search after 'myself', he "never can *observe* anything but the perception." (italics mine); the

(ii) Our knowledge of the self is by way of *notion*.

1. Cf: "But however much assailed or disowned, the concept of a 'self' or conscious subject is to be found implicitely or explicitely in all psychological writers whatever not more in Berkeley, who accepts it as a fact, than in Hume, who accepts it as a fiction" [Ward, *Psychological Principles*, p. 35].

self being never an object of observation. He was wrong in concluding that because we have never any sense-impression of the self, it does not exist at all and is but a fiction of the mind. "We know *intellectually*" writes Ward, "what we are as experients: into the empty 'form of consciousness' our being fits." [1] Apart from a mere difference in terminology Berkeley certainly admits this; and, therefore, when mordern psychologists speak of an '*idea*' of the self, they need not be supposed to contradict Berkeley.

(iii) The conative aspect of the self.

A further point in which Berkeley finds support from modern psychologists is his emphasis on the conative aspect of the self. It has been already shown how according to him, the *esse* of the self consists not so much in passive perception as active will. Modern psychology fully recognises the importance of conation; and the abstract faculty psychology has been overthrown long since. Conation and cognition are no longer regarded as separate faculties which the self employs at different times; it being now freely admitted on the contrary that all cognition involves conation, and that conation does not signify any separate faculty but only the self as willing.[2] "Cognition, feeling, and conation are

1. *Ibid*, p. 381.

2 In consequence, modern psychology speaks of these, no longer as 'faculties' but as the 'attitudes' of the self.

abstractly and analytically distinct phases in any concrete psychosis; but they are not separable. They do not occur in isolation from each other." [1] Ward too arrives at the same conclusion at the end of his General Analysis of Experience. [2] He concludes his discussion of cognition, conation and feeling, the three 'elements' of consciousness, with the significant observation that the three are not to be looked upon as three genera of consciousness, but rather as three distinct and irreducible compartments which together constitute one concrete state of mind. Conation, then, is involved in all experience and may in a sense be said to constitute primarily the *esse* of the self or the subject. In particular, Berkeley's insistence on the conative or the willing attitude of the self will be found echoed in the following definition of psychology given by ward: "Psychology, then, we define as the science of individual experience—understanding by experience, not merely, not primarily, cognition, but also, and above all, conative activity or behaviour."[3]

We have so far discussed the Berkeleyan account of the self fron its constructive side; and have seen how modern psychology advances its

1 Stout, *Manual of Psychology*, p. 117.

2 *Psychological Principles*, Chapter 2.

3. *Ibid*, chap I, p. 34.

willing support to it in some of its salient points. There now remains a task of a quite different nature. Let us now betake ourselves to a critical consideration of those points in Berkeley's account of our own self wherein he may be said to have supplied a fair ground for modern psychology to criticise and attack.

Weak points in the Berkeleyan account criticised.

Berkeley believed that while we are conscious of our own selves directly and immediately,[1] our knowledge of other finite spirits is only mediate, a result of analogical inference.[2] This means that we are first conscious of our own selves and *then* of the other finite spirits. Our own self-consciousness, according to this theory, is independent of our consciousness and knowledge of other finite spirits. Berkeley accepts this account of self-consciousness, in fact, from his philosophical predecessors, Locke and Descartes.

But there is a serious flaw in all this Cartesian account of the fact of self-consciousness, pointed out

1. Cf Berkeley: "We comprehend our own existence by inward feeling or reflection, amd that of other spirits by reason" [i. e, by inference]. *Principles* s. 89.

2. For a detailed account of this inferential process, see the next chapter.

by modern critics and psychologists. It has been established that man is through and through a social being, and that his consciousness of the existence of his own self involves essentially the consciousness of various relations to other living beings in this world. The Cartesian account of self-consciousness is accordingly declared to be a result of empty abstraction. A child is conscious of itself as a *son*, that is, in some relation to some other beings; a king as a *ruler*, that is, in some relation to other living beings. It is difficult to see what the self being conscious of itself can mean, apart from all its relations to other finite spirits. "The thought of self" to quote Stout again, "always involves the thought of manifold and complex relations to other selves. A man's own ideal representation of himself includes the view which he thinks others take of him, the view which he wishes them to take of him, the view which he anticipates they will take of him, or that they would take of him if he acted in certain ways, and so forth".[1] "As the very etymology of such words as 'society' snd 'community' shows," writes Prof. Taylor,"—to say nothing of the results of psychological inquiry into the process of learning by imitation—the conception of human selves as

Do we know other spirits *after* we know our own ?

1. *Manual of Psychology*, p. 584. For a fuller account of the influence of the social factor on the development of self-consciousness, see *ibid* pp. 583-87.

independent units which some how happen to stand in merely accidental or external relation is in flagrant conflict with the most fundamental facts of our social experience."[1] The psychological concept of self is essentially teleological and involves the ideas of various ends and purposes. Now, these ends and purposes of our own necessarily persuppose and have no meaning apart from the partly consistent, partly antagonistic ends and purposes of other living beings besides ourselves. "Precisely because our lives and purposes are not self-contained, self-explaining wholes," writes Prof. Taylor in another place, "we can not possibly know our own meaning except in so far as we know the meaning of our immediate fellows. Self-knowledge, apart from the knowledge of myself as a being with aims and purposes conditioned by those of like beings in social relations with myself, is an empty and senseless word. The recent psychological studies of the part which imitation plays in all learning make this result still more palpably manifest..... Thus we may confidently say that the reality of purposive significant experience which is not my own is as directly certain as the reality of my own experience, and that the knowledge of both realities is inevitably gained together in the process of coming to clear insight into my own practical aims and interests. The inner experience of my fellows is indubitably

1. *Elements of Metaphysics*, p. 89.

real to the same degree as my own, because the very existence of my own purposive life is meaningless apart from the equal existence of others."[1] Self consciousness is, then, an impossible and senseless abstraction apart from the simultaneous consciousness of other selves.[2] Further, if our knowledge of the existence of other spirits is only a result of analogical inference, it will remain throughout only a probable induction, and we shall never be *certain* that other beings besides ourselves live and exist.[3]

The fact is, that the Berkeleyan definition of the self as a simple, indivisible, incorporeal substance is discarded since long by modern psychology, as a piece of theological mysticism. The idea of the self according to modern psychology, which is more true to experience than the theological psychology of Berkeley and others of his school, is essentially a teleological and a relative idea.[4] Accordingly it is regarded not as a fixed but as a

The strict dualism involved in Berkeley's account.

1. *Ibid*, p. 296. The reader will do well to go through the whole of Bk. III, Ch. II, S. 3, of Taylor's *Elements of Metaphysics*.

2. Cf. besides, Bradley: "The self is not an exclusive thing, but is determined and characterised by its relations with others." *Ethical Studies*, p. 116.

3. *Vide, infra*, Bk III, chap II, p. 215.

4. This is explained in details below.

constantly fluctuating idea. Further, modern psychology repudiates the strict Cartesian dualism between matter and mind, or what is the same thing expressed in Berkeley's words, between the ideas and the spirits. "But it has been made evident that *bodies*, of what frame and texture soever, are barely passive ideas in the *mind*—which is more distant and heterogeneous from them than light is from darkness." [1] Or again, "Spirits and ideas are things so wholly different, that when we say, 'they exsit' 'they are known' or the like, these words must not be thought to signify anything common to both natures. There is nothing alike or common in them."[2]

Can two *wholly* different substances interact ?

Berkeley is never tired of insisting on this point. "It is therefore necessary," he writes again in the ***Principles***, "in order to prevent equivocation and confounding natures perfectly disagreeing and unlike, that we distinguish between SPIRIT and IDEA".[3] But the question that naturally arises here is: Can two *perfectly* disagreeing and unlike substances interact ? Can one substance affect another that is *wholly* and in *all* respects different from it ? The

1. *Ibid* s. 142.
2. *Principles* s. 141.
3. *Ibid.* s. 139.

actual fact of experience, however, is that the self does produce motions in the material body, which in Berkeley's terminology is a cluster of inert ideas. How to explain, then, this indubitable fact of everyday experience, as well as the other equally certain fact that the inert ideas produce modifications in the self ? This was just the Cartesian problem to which the Occasionalists replied by maintaining that at each time of interaction it is really God who intervens and brings about the interaction. Berkeley himself can not be said to have given a satisfactory solution to the above most important and urgent metaphysical problem. On his own principles which maintain the strictest dualism between the subjects or the spirits and the objects or the ideas, any interaction between the two seems impossible, and the union between the body and the soul but accidental. "It seems very easy" writes Berkeley in a letter, "to conceive the *soul* to exist in a separate state (i. e. divested from those limits and laws of motion and perception with which she is embarrased here), and to exercise herself on new ideas–without the intervention of those tangible things we call our bodies. It is even very possible to conceive how the soul may have ideas of colour without an eye, or of sounds without an ear."[1] But can the mere 'possibility to conceive' amount by itself to a proof that the soul can exist without the body ? Is it not

1. Fraser's *Life and Letters of Berkeley* Ch. V.

tantamount after all only to an assumption, a suggestion, an hypothesis, and to nothing more than that?

The self and the not-self.

Now, our experience of the self, it is rightly insisted, is always of an *embodied* existence. In fact, the psychological idea of the self is always as said above relative, and necessarily involves the corrosponding idea of the not-self. For us finite spirits, at least, self-consciousness is impossible apart from a simultaneous corrosponding idea of the not-self, which includes the 'inert ideas' of perception, as well as other conscious finite spirits. Every idea of the self, every description of it, every experience of it, is essentially in terms of and in relations with another idea of the not-self. The relation may be negative, as when we say that the self is not the tree, not the house or even not the matter. But you must know and have been conscious of these things *first*, before you can posit such a negative relation with them. In no case, then, can we have any knowledge or consciousness of the self, apart from a corrosponding knowledge or consciousness of the not-self. We have never an experience of a self which is nothing but the same self, which involves, that is, absolutely no relation to any other thing in this whole universe of thought and existence. In fact our very idea of our self, if we properly observe and examine it, will

be found to consist in great part of associations with the body and other external things. If then, we have never an experience or consciousness of the self which is nothing but itself and includes no relation to the not-self, on what grounds but groundless assumption can we declare that the self is by nature entirely distinct from the body, and that it can continue to live even when sundered from all such objective experience[1]? "The pure subject or ego, which we reach in our analysis of experience at its rational level stands for no abstraction so long as we are content to distinguish it without attempting to seperate it from its objective complement, the non-ego"[2].

Is self-development possible on Berkeley's principles?

A further corrollary of some importance follows from our above discussion. The modern idea of the self, essentially involving as it does, the corrosponding idea of the not-self, and being further, a relative idea, is capable, it naturally follows, of development or evolution.[3] On Berkeley's views

1. This point, as the reader may have guessed, lands us into Berkeley's treatment of the problem of the immortality of the soul, and is treated in Book III chapter IV.

2. *Psychological Priciples*, Ch. 15.

3. Cf. "The self is essentially a thing of development, and as as such has its being in the time process." Taylor, *Elements of Metaphysics*, p 340-41.

any such development of the self seems difficult to explain. 'His Minerva' to use Lamb's expression 'is born in complete panoply.' It is from the birth what it can ever be.[1] For, how can the experience of inert ideas which are completely foreign to it, ever affect it and bring about a change in it ?[2] Any such conception of the self, however, contradicts obviously our plainest experience. Self-consciousness is continually seen to develop as the child grows and becomes a man; and his idea of himself rapidly changes. Today he thinks of himself only as a son, tomorrow also as a pupil, some days after as a friend too, while after the passage of some years his self-consciousness will have excluded the former idea of the pupil and have included on the other hand newer ideas of himself as a servant or an officer or a ruler and so on. The idea of the self according to modern psychology, as said above, is essentially a

1. Berkeley himself, of cousse, never draws this conclusion expressly, though it follows legitimately from his assumptions.

2. Ch. Berkeley himself: "Nothing can be plainer than that the motions, changes, decays and dissolutions which we hourly see befall natural bodies (and which is what we mean by the *course of nature*) can not possibly affect an active simple, uncompounded substance." (*Principles.* s, 141) Besides, as said above, can two substances that are wholly and completely different from and unlike one another interact or produce any effects in one another ?

teleological and a relative idea. It is in a sense the conception of a limit. Now, the boundary between the self and the not-self naturally varies from time to time. Today my friendship with X appears so near and vital to myself, that my consciousness of my own self includes the idea of myself as a friend of X. Tomorrow it may not be so, and that idea may have receded into the not-self. The idea of the self is thus a relative idea. That it is therefore capable of development or evolution shows further its teleological character. It is only because it is a relative and not a fixed idea that it is capable of development or evolution. It would not be an easy task to explain, on a strict interpretation of Berkeley's principles, the meaning of the phrase self-development. The self, according to modern notions, develops, that is, keeps before itself higher and wider ideals or purposes than before. We believe that the self of a truthful man is on a higher level than that of a thief; that the self of a great man like Christ or Gandhi is higher on the evolutional scale than that of an ordinary man. But all this means that the self (or rather the self-consciousness) differs in different men and in the same man at different times.

In fine, we may close the whole discussion concerning the nature of the self by concluding that the self of the human self-consciousness, the self which is the result of direct intuition within each of us, the

self, in other words, which is the subject of the Cartesian formula '*Cogito ergo sum*',--this self of the 'empirical'[1] philosophers is *not* an entity which may be described as a 'simple, indivisible, incorporeal, spiritual substance', which is absolutely foreign in nature to and is not affected by any change in the external 'material' things of perception, and which is known prior to and is independent of the consciousness of the other finite spirits; but *is* an entity which is distinct, no doubt, from its ideas and its impressions, and may be described as the subject or the ego, the indispensable condition of all our experience; which is the most central fact within us, and is "the thinker of all our inmost thoughts, the doer of all our very deeds—no longer any presentation of self, but the self that has these and all other presentations ";[2] which essentially "implies, and has no existence apart from, a not-self,[3] and is, only in the contrast with the not-self... aware of itself as a self";[4] and which is therefore teleological and relative in nature and is capable of development or evolution in either direction.[5]

1. Taking the word 'experience' in the wider sense.

2 Ward, *Psychological Principles*, Ch. XV.

3 (This not-self, including other living beings as well as lifeless bodies).

4. Taylor: *Elements of Metaphysics*, p. 336.

5. The reader should carefully note the precise point in which Berkeley's weakness lies. It is true that even the

There now remains in our examination of the Berkeleyan account of the self one point, which though already touched in some detail in the previous pages, occupies such an important place both in an account of the philosophy of Berkeley, as well as in

III. Matter *versus* Spirit.

Indian philosophers describe the self as 'one, simple, indivisible, incorporeal spiritual being'. But there is a world of difference between their position and that of a philosopher like Berkeley. In the first place, while the former based their statement on direct experience, (in what they called *samadhi*), Berkeley's was a mere assumption, an inheritance from the Cartesian stock of philosophical notions. The second and most important difference is that the Indian Advaita philosophers maintained in unmistakable terms a clear distinction between the emirical soul and the ultimate real self. They admitted that it is not the self of the ordinary self-consciousness that is to be thus described as a simple incorporeal substance, in nature absolutely independent of matter. They did not deny the fact that the ordinary self-consciousness reveals a self which is invariably immersed in all materialistic associations and which is certainly affected by changes and motions in the external things of perception. They only maintained that in its real ultimate nature, which is realised by the Yogies and other persons of high spiritual level, the self can be described in the above manner and is independent of all matter. Berkeley maintained no such distinction. His mistake, therefore, was to confuse the empirical '*Jiva*' of the Indian philosophers with their real '*Atman*'. He, and in fact the Cartesian philosophers, did not see that the

the subsequent development of philosophical speculations, that it deserves a special and a more detailed treatment at out hands even at the cost of some repetition. The point concerns the challenge thrown to Berkeley by his immediate successor either to accept the material substance or to reject the Spiritual as well. It was Hume coming after Berkeley who objected to the arguments of the latter in favour of the existence of spirits that

Can Berkeley retain Spirit while he rejects Matter ?

attributes which they assigned to the self were not true of that self of which they were speaking when they said that every man was conscious of it. The subject of '*Cogito ergo sum*' was essentially an empirical self and not the real *atman*. Hence, while the Cartesian conception of the self is open to attacks from modern empirical psychology, the latter is impotent as against the concept of *atman* in the Indian Advaita philosophy, as the empirical psychology does not deal with the Advaitist's real self, which is already declared to be beyond ordinary human experience. (The concept of the empircal *jiva* of the Indian philosophers, on the other hand, agrees with modern psychology in as much as it is admitted to be capable of the fact of development and evolution, though Indian philosophy differs from modern Western psychology in its view of the details and the direction of the evolution process; self-development, according to the former, consisting in gradually realising more and more the fact that the worldly materialistic associations of the ordinary self-consciousness do not pertain to the real nature of the self). Thirdly Indian,

they could all be disproved by those very arguments which Berkeley advanced against the concept of material substance. If a thing consists only of ideas without any material substance, why not resolve the soul also, asked Hume, into a perpetual flux of ideas without the conception of any spiritual substance as their substratum ? If a thing is nothing but ideas, is the soul anything but ideas ? "For my part", says Hume, "when I enter most intimately into what I call *myself*, I always stumble upon some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or

philosophers distinguish very sharply between the mind ('*manas*'), the reason or intelligence ('*buddhi*'), and the self ('*Atman*'). While all the ordinary functions of perception, feeling and judging are attributed to the first two, the last is declared to the completely indifferent to all worldly matters. Here, again, Berkeley makes no such distinction and may be said to have confused the *manas* and the *buddhi* of the Indian philosophers with their *Atman*. When Berkeley's notion of one, simple, indivisible, incorporeal self is criticised, it should not, therefore, be concluded that no such self really exists. What is proved is only that such a self is not the one of which we all have a direct intuition in our ordinary self-consciousness; and that you can not describe the self in these terms if you want to adduce at the same time, in support of the existence of your self, the argument of '*Cogito ergo sum*', or in other words, the fact that each man is immediately conscious within himself of the existence of his own self.

pleasure. I never can catch *myself* at any time without a perception, and never can observe anything but the perception. When my perceptions are removed for any time—as by sound sleep— so long am I insensible of *myself* and may truly be said not to exist".[1] To Hume, then, the self is *nothing but* its ideas or perceptions as he calls them.

Berkeley's answer.

Berkeley had already anticipated such an objection to his doctrines, and answered it in his *Third Dialogue between Hylas and Philonous.* "In consequence of your principles," objects Hylas, "it should follow that you are only a system of floating ideas." Berkeley's answer to any such attempt at applying to his spiritual substance the arguments that he advances against the material one, may be analytically stated as follows:—

(i) He rejects the concept of material substance because it is both inconsistent and and 'repugnant'; he finds no such inconsistency in the concept of spirit.

(ii) There is no necessity to believe in the concept of material substance. Berkeley believes that he can consistently explain all our experience even without the concept of matter. But no reasonable account can ever be given of our experience without

1. *Treatise of Human Nature,* Bk I Ch IV, 6.

positing the existence of the spirit. It is thus absolutely necessary for experience, while the concept of matter is wholly unnecessary.

(iii) The third and the most important argument of Berkeley may now be stated. I am not conscious of anything besides my own ideas, says he, when I perceive a thing. I am not conscious that the thing is something different from my ideas. On the contrary, all the reasoning goes to prove the identity of things and ideas. But in the case of the self, according to Berkeley, I have the clearest consciousness that I am *not* my ideas, that I am some one who perceives the ideas and hence is something different from them. To the objection of Hylas that the self too, like the things of external perception, may be nothing but ' a system of floating ideas without any substance to support them ', Philonous, (who represents Berkeley) replies in the following words : " How often must I repeat that *I know or am conscious of my own being,* and that *I myself* am not my ideas but somewhat else–a thinking active principle that perceives, knows, wills and operates about ideas. I *know* that I–the same self–perceive both colours and sounds : that a colour cannot perceive a sound, nor a sound a colour : that I am therefore one individual principle, distinct from colour and sound : and, for that reason from all other sensible things and inert ideas. But I am

not in like manner conscious either of the existence or essence of matter."

The passage quoted above is of extreme importance, and should be carefully compared with that of Hume which is also quoted a few lines above. It clearly brings out the different results obtained by the same method of introspection by Berkeley and Hume. While one is clearly conscious that he is not the same as his ideas; the other fails to find anything like 'myself' apart from the ideas or perceptions. To the one, the self is one, permanent, indivisible, spiritual being; to the other, it is nothing but a continuous flux of perishing impressions quickly succeeding one another. There is thus a fundamental difference between the views of the two philosophers regarding the nature of the self, and *it is hence not correct to say that Hume is Berkeley reduced to consistency.*[1] To the latter, there is a fundamental difference between the material and the spiritual substance. And when Hume, later on, accepting Berkeley's arguments against the concept of material substance applied the same to his spiritual substance he did not reduce Berkeley's philosophy to consistency,

Was Hume's philosophy a *reductio ad absurdum* of Berkeley's Principles?

1 Commenting on this point, Fraser remarks: "He (Berkeley) so guarded himself that Hume's universal scepticism is no legitimate expansion of the 'Principles of Human Knowledge'," *Berkeley*, pp 196 footnote. Besides the important difference in their views regarding the nature of the self, Berkeley and Hume differ fundamentally in the following points:—(i) While Berkeley assumes the validity of the axiom of causality, Hume rejects it. (ii) Berkeley admits, which Hume does not, that our knowledge of the spirits, relations, mental operations etc. is not received by us through sense, but is a product of reason or intelligence.

1. *Development of Berkeley's Philosophy*, by Johnston, pp. 52–53.

but introduced quite a different account of the self which Berkeley had explicitly rejected.

In these two contradictory views regarding the nature of the self, Berkeley is undoubtedly on safer grounds than Hume. Few modern psychologists would care to support Hume's revolutionary theory that the self is nothing but the particular ideas. Judged by the reasoned opinion of modern psychologists and philosophers, Berkeley's statement that he is conscious that he is not the ideas but something different from them, is much more correct than Hume's; and consequently, the remark that "Berkeley's introspection revealed to him only aggregates of ideas in perpetual flux. Introspection does not enable us to form an idea of the mind as an entity distinct from the series of fleeting perceptions" [1] must be accepted with caution. It

The self as revealed in introspection.

is true that " introspection does not enable us to form an *idea* of the mind as an entity distinct from the series of fleeting perceptions ", if by the word ' ideas ' are meant only those objects of knowledge which are particular and of which we can have mental pictures. In this sense, of course, we can not form an idea of the mind, as an entity distinct from the perceptions, by introspection. But this does not mean, as Hume thought it to mean, that therefore we have no knowledge whatsoever of the self. According to Hume, because we have no idea (or perception, in his terminology) of the self, we have no knowledge whatsoever of it, and consequently it does not exist at all. It is true that in his youth Berkeley too was inclined towards this conclusion; but he soon perceived that " ideas " by no means exhaust all the objects of thought, there being " notions " besides them, of which too we have some knowledge. And thus according to Berkeley, though we have no *idea* of a permanent mind distinct from particular perceptions, we have yet a *notion* of it. Again, the first part of the remark, ' Berkeley's introspection revealed to him only aggregates of ideas in perpetual flux', contains an inaccuracy of expression. It might be that whatever *ideas* were revealed by Berkeley's introspection were only aggregates in perpetual flux. But then ideas were *not all* that it

revealed; as besides these changing "ideas", it may also be said to have revealed a *notion* of a permanent self.

In all this, Berkeley and not Hume receives support from modern wisdom. Self-consciousness does indeed reveal, that I am not my ideas but something distinct from them. When I see the wall I am conscious that I am not my idea of the wall, but some one who perceives it. So again, when I feel sorrow, I am clearly conscious that my feeling of sorrow is not myself. In fact the very use of the word ' my ' proves it. If, as Hume maintains, *I myself* am nothing apart from the perpetual flux of ideas, what is meant by saying, asks Berkeley, that they are all *my* ideas or *my* perceptions ? Again, as Green points out, how can Hume know, if his self is not some one permanent entity distinct from the perishing perceptions, that the perceptions *succeed* one another ? *You* can not know that fact unless you are some one standing outside the perishing train of ideas.[1] Introspection does indeed reveal the

1 It is interesting to compare with this criticism of Hume by Green, Shankaracharya's criticism of the Bauddha doctrine, similar to Hume's, that there is really no *one* self but a series of fleeting perceptions and that the feeling of *one*ness in our selfconsciousness is really the result of the resemblance between the quickly succeeding perishing feelings. "स यदि ब्रुयात्साहश्यादेतत्संपत्स्यत इति । तं प्रतिब्रुयात्—

existence of the mind (not by way of an 'idea' but of a ' notion ') as an entity distinct from the series of fleeting perceptions, and to criticise Berkeley in this respect on the lines of Hume is futile.

तेनेदं सदृशमिति द्वयायत्तत्वात्सादृश्यस्य । क्षणभंगवादिनः सदृशयोर्द्वयोर्वस्तुनोर्ग्रहीतुरेकस्याभावात् सादृशनिमित्तं प्रतिसंधानमिति मिथ्याप्रलाप एव स्यात् "। (*Brahma-Sutras*, II, ii, 25.) ("If he were to argue that the self is recognised as one and the same (not because it is really so, but) because of the similarity (between the various momentary self cognitions), we refute him by the counterargument that the cognition of similarity depends on the presentation of two things, and therefore (our opponent) who advocates momentariness (in all things material as well as spiritual), *in as much as he denies the existence* of *some one permanent subject capable of cognising the two resembling things*, utters something nonsense when he states that the cognition is due to similarity.")

CHAPTER II.

OTHER FINITE SPIRITS.

Introductory. How do we know that other spirits besides us exist ?

After our study of the knowledge we have of our own existence, the next thing that demands immediate attention in our metaphysical inquiries, is the manner and validity of the process by which we come to believe in the existence of other finite souls like our own. We see countless bodies around us. But far from treating them equally, we distinguish in them two chief classes–organic and inorganic bodies. While one body is called " living ", as containing within itself the unique invisible principle " life, " another how so ever it may resemble the first in size, shape, colour and other external attributes, is at once classed as inorganic and lifeless. Whence the source of this distinction ? We shall not discuss here the most difficult problem of the nature of this soul or life, this *differentia* between the two classes of bodies. Be it what it may, our question at present is: how do we know that one body contains life, while another does not ? How do we, in other words, come to have the knowledge of the existence of other living beings–more particularly, other finite spirits—besides our own selves ?

The problem as outlined in the last sentence above is not an easy one, and Berkeley is singularly mistaken in his attempt to answer it. His answer is of course on the lines of his Cartesian predecessors. Starting, like them, with an empty abstract 'self-consciousness', he was compelled to maintain that our knowledge of the existence of other finite minds is only mediate and inferential. We are conscious of our own selves by means of an immediate intuition; our knowledge of the selves of others is a later result of analogical inference. "We comprehend our own existence by inward feeling or reflection, and of other spirits by reason" (that is by inference.)[1] "Moreover", he writes in another place, "as we conceive the ideas that are in the mind of other spirits by means of our own, which we suppose to be resemblances of them; so we know *other spirits* by means of *our own soul* which in that sense *is the image or idea of them*"[2] Berkeley has left no doubt regarding his view in this respect. "From what has been said," he reiterates in the *Principles* "it is plain that we cannot know the existence of *other spirits* otherwise than by their operations, or the ideas by them excited in us..... Hence, the knowledge I have of other spirits is not immediate,

Berkeley's answer: we know them by analogical inference.

1. *Principles.* s. 89.
2. *Ibid* s. 140.

as is the knowledge of my ideas."[1] What we see, or rather perceive, directly and immediately is only certain 'ideas'; thence we *infer* and are led to think of the existence of some other spirits like our own, while the spirit in itself remains incapable of sense perception. "Hence it is plain *we do not see a man* if by *man* is meant that which lives, moves, perceives, and thinks as we do–but only such a certain collection of ideas as directs us to think there is a distinct principle of thought and motion, like to ourselves, accompanying and represented by it."[2]

Our knowledge of the existence of other spirits is thus, according to Berkeley, only a result of analogical inference from our own existence. Let us examine further the nature and details of this inferential process. There are three things that the finite spirits do: they (1) perceive the impressions or the ideas of sense; (2) cause mental representations of the external ideas perceived by sense; and, (3) excite some limited ideas by means of their bodies. Out of these three things, a spirit is passive in the first while active in the other two. Now, the inference of the existence of the

The Inferential process explained in details.

1. *Ibid*, s, 145.
2. *Ibid*, s. 148. cf. besides, the *Dialogue on Divine Visual Language* (*Selections* pp. 226-30).

other spirits is not grounded on their passivity in perceiving ideas, as activity and not passivity is the *esse* of a spirit; nor can it be grounded on their power of causing mental representations as "these images are private and *qua* images incommunicable." What remains, then, to serve as a ground for inference is the third thing viz., their ability to cause certain limited presentations by means of their bodies. Berkeley thus summarises his argument in this respect: "I perceive several motions, changes, and combinations of ideas, that inform me there are certain peculiar agents, like myself, which accompany them and concur in their production";[1] which Johnston further explains in the following words:—"I make a box. When I look at it, a certain presentation is in or before my mind. This presentation is ultimately caused by God, but the box which I have made is in some way the occasion of it. Now, if a presentation similar to the one which I have when I look at the box that I have made is excited in my mind at another time and place, I infer that its occasion is a box similar to the one made by me. Now, as I did not make this box myself, I infer that it was made by some finite spirit like myself. Other finite spirits therefore exist."[2]

1. *Principles*, s 145. For a fuller statement of this process of inference, in Berkeley's own words, see *Principles*. s. 26.

2. *Development of Berkeley's Philosophy* pp. 195-96.

We have seen above in sufficient details Berkeley's account of the knowledge that we have of the existence of other finite spirits besides ourselves. The reader should note the following chief points in this account: (i) The knowledge of spirits is not by way of ideas but *notions*; (ii) It is mediate and arrived at by way of analogy and inference from the results of the activity of the spirit; (iii) it is arived at later than the knowledge of our own self; (iv) and lastly, that the inferred self is exactly resembling our own self.

Can we know our own self before we know other spirits?

The belief of Berkeley and his Cartesian predecessors that our knowledge of other spirits is inferential and mediate while that our own existence immediate and direct, has received a rude shock in these days when it is strongly insisted that the very consciousness of our own self is impossible apart from the simultaneous consciousness of other selves. Berkeley's account implies that we can *first* be conscious of our own exclusive self, and then later on of other selves. But such a notion of exclusive self-consciousness is now declared as an empty abstraction, and consequently thrown into the lumber-room of old discarded philosophical notions. The doctrine of Evolution has now established beyond doubt that man is through and through a social being, and that so far as our intellectual

vision can go and peep into the dark and vague antiquity, it is impossible to find any instance of organic life that is segragated from all social environments. The relation between our own self and other spirits is not external and accidental as Hobbes and others considered it to be, but is on the contrary internal and *organic*. The knowledge of other spirits can not then be a result of inference;[1] and our consciousness of the existence of other spirits must be as direct as that of our own existence.

Other minor arguments against Berkeley.

But, besides this, there are other minor points that go against the above Berkeleyan account. If the existence of other finite spirits is to be the result of inference, which as a mental and logical process presupposes a certain degree of intellectual development, how can a new-born child who is yet far below on the intellectual level know that other spirits exist? Or, is he completely ignorant of this very important truth till he reaches the required intellectual level that would enable him to perform the inference explicitly or implicitly ?[2]

1. This point has been sufficiently discussed in the previous chapter.

2. This minor point, which only slightly touches our main discussion, is doubtfut and put before the reader as a tentative suggestion for him to ponder over and decide for himself.

What has our every day experience to say on this point? Further, if our knowledge of other persons is really by way of an inference from analogy, we can never be *certain* that other men exist. The result of analogy, as any treatise on logic will inform the reader, is never certain but only *probable*; and though the degree of probability may certainly vary from the very lowest to the very highest, it can never amount to perfect certainty. Now, is even Berkeley himself—let alone the ordinary man—willing to accept that our knowledge of the existence of other men is only probable–most probable though it be—but not *certain* ?

The wisdom and necessity of the inferential process questioned.

We have already seen that Berkeley's analogical inference of the existence of others is based on our perception of some ideas like to those which we have previously produced, but which in this case, we are conscious, we have not produced. Now, it is here objected that from the perception of these ideas Berkeley has no right to infer the existence of any other finite spirit like himself, since all ideas of perception are according to him caused by God. When I see the second box like to the one that I had made before, why should I necessarily infer that this idea has been caused by other finite spirit like myself, and not rather by the Infinite Spirit

Himself ?[1] Berkeley had dimmly perceived the difficulty himself. "There is not any one mark" we find him saying, "that denotes a man, or effect produced by him, which does not more strongly evince the being of that Spirit who is the Author of Nature. For, it is evident that in affecting other persons the will of man has no other object than barely the motions of the limbs of his body; but that such a motion should be attended by, or excite any idea in the mind of another, depends wholly on the will of the Creator."[2] But, if God is a sufficient and fully able cause of all our ideas of perception, what is the necessity of inferring besides Him the existence of other finite spirits as secondary causes ? Though Berkeley saw the difficulty, his answer to it is by no means clear and satisfactory. "He alone it is" he proceeds, "who, 'upholding all things by' the word of His power maintains that intercourse between spirits whereby they are able to perceive the existence of each other." The answer is extremely vague, and fails totally to solve the question that we raised above as to the wisdom and necessity of inferring the existence of other finite

1. Thus, on Berkeley's principles, speaking strictly, Robinson Crusoe, when he saw some foot prints on the sand like those that he had previously made. should have inferred the existence not of other human beings but of the Infinite God !

2. *Principles* s. 147.

spirits when God is admitted to be a sufficient cause of all ideas. Is not Berkeley's account tantamount to the Occasionalistic view ? Interpreted properly, it means that the will of a man can at most excite 'barely the motions of the limbs of his body'; and that these motions then serve as *occasions* for God to excite certain ideas in us. Berkeley himself has criticised[1] the Occasionalistic view of material substance i. e., the view that matter signifies certain ideas, which, though unknown to and unperceived by us, are nevertheless perceived by God to whom they are, 'as it were so many occasions to remind Him when and what ideas to imprint on our minds'. But his own view regarding the acts of other spirits appears like this same view. Like those material occasions, the motions of the body, and acts of the will of other men are also *not* perceived by us; what we do perceive being only certain ideas for which, however, as he himself admits, God is "wholly" responsible. May we not urge against this view his own arguments against the Occasionalistic view of matter ? May we not, in other words, advance, *mutatis mutandis*, the following argument of his own against his view regarding our inference of the other spirits: "For, what is there on our part, or what do we perceive, amongst all the ideas, sensations, notions which are imprinted on our minds, either by sense or reflection, from whence may be inferred the

1. *Principles* s. 68-72, & 74.

existence of an.....unperceived *occasion*? and, on the other hand, on the part of All sufficient Spirit, what can there be that should make us believe or even suspect He is directed by an .. *occasion* to excite ideas in our minds?" Since the "All sufficient Spirit" is already there capable of exciting, without the least trouble, whatever ideas it wishes to excite in our minds, whence the wisdom and necessity of inferring these finite spirits as secondary occasional causes, who after all, even when assumed, are clearly admitted to be incapable of exciting any ideas in the minds of others?

But is such an inference even possible on Berkeley's principles?

We have so far questioned the wisdom and the necessity of the Berkeleyan inferential process by which we are said to derive our knowledge of the existence of other men; let us now go a step further and question its very possibility. Leaving aside the question of its wisdom and necessity, is such an analogical inference as Berkeley alleges, even ***possible*** on his principles?

Berkeley's analogical inference as already shown is based on the alleged results of the activity of the other spirits. I had previously made a box. I now see a similar box made, which, I know, I did not make. I infer from this that the box now before me must have been made by some other finite spirit like

myself. But it is here obvious that such an inference on my part is possible only if I perceive the very *same* box which is alleged to be the product of that other spirit. It appears, however, from what Berkeley states elsewhere concerning the numerical identity of things, that according to him no two persons see the ***same*** thing at the same time nor even the same man at different times.[1] Having reduced all sameness in things to mere similarity, Berkeley really cuts the very ground from under all such inference and makes it absolutely impossible. When ten persons see the moon, what they see, on Berkeley's principles, is really ten different though exactly similar moons, each of which is private to its percipient. This is complete subjectivism. But on such strictly subjectivist grounds any intercourse between finite spirits is impossible. The box which I see is *not* the *same* as that made by the assumed finite spirit. What I see he has not made. What he has really prepared I cannot see. The idea which I am now perceiving and which I interpret as a box, is numerically *different*, though similar in all other respects, from the idea connected with the activity of the alleged other spirit. I, therefore, cannot legitimately infer from the idea which I am preceiving the existence of any but the Infinite Spirit.

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1. For a discussion of this important problem see *supra* Bk II Chap. III

Berkeley cannot, thus, on a strict and consistent interpretation of his statements elsewhere really maintain the existence of other finite spirits. His inferential process is, we have shown, both unnecessary and impossible. He is therefore said to have inconsistently *assumed* rather than consistently established his belief in other finite spirits besides himself. On his philosophy, one can believe in the existence only of his own self and the Infinite God.[1] More than this he has no right to assume.

His own argument from dreams advanced against himself.

Besides the above arguments, however, there is another interesting though minor argument that may well be advanced against Berkeley in this connection. While arguing against the concept of material substance, he had himself urged that our experience in 'dreams, frenzies and the like,' in which we believe we have experience of external independent things though really there are none such, puts it beyond doubt that our belief in material substance is wholly unnecessary and and groundless. But does not the same happen with regard to the spirits too ? We think we speak and communicate with so many finite spirits in our dreams though there are really no such spirits existing

1. It is therefore said that the concept of God alone saves Berkeley's philosophy from lapsing into Solipsism. See *supra* Bk I. chap.II.

besides our own self. May we not, then, (merely substitute the words 'spirits' and 'causing' for the words 'bodies' and 'resembling' respectively in the following passage and thus)advance against Berkeley's assumption of the existence of other finite spirits, his own argument in the very same words which he used against the concept of Matter : " I say it is granted on all hands and what happens in dreams, frenzies, and the like, puts in beyond dispute that it is possible we might be affected with all the ideas we have now, though there were no spirits (bodies) existing without, causing (resembling) them. Hence, it is evident the supposition of external spirits (bodies) is not necessary for the producing our ideas; since it is granted they are produced sometimes, and might possibly be produced always in the same order we see them in at present, without their concurrence ?"[1]

Conclusion.

Berkeley's arguments in favour of the existence of other finite spirits besides himself have thus been critically examined by us and their exact value estimated. We shall, however, do well to note in conclusion

1. *Principles* s. 18. In fact, one can urge *mutatis mutandis* the whole of s 18 against Berkeley. The Materialists, complains Berkeley, cannot explain how a material substance can ever produce ideas. But can Berkeley himself explain how the incorporeal soul can produce motions in the physical bodies, which being nothing but 'clusters of inert ideas' are *wholly* different from the spirits ?

that our discussion in this chapter proves only that Berkeley's own arguments in favour of the existence of other finite spirits are inconsistent with the rest of his philosophy and not that other spirits do not exist at all. The reader should once more note carefully that what is challenged is the argument and not his conclusion. It is here maintained that Berkeley rather assumes than proves the existence of other finite spirits besides and like his own self; and that in so assuming their existence he is not consistent with the rest of his philosophy. The whole source of Berkeley's error, as the reader may have gathered by this time for himself, lies in his false account of the empty abstract self consciousness (as revealed in our ordinary introspection), according to which the self is divorced from all its relations to and associations with other fellow-spirits as well as the external things of perception including our own bodies. He had inherited this erroneous account from his Cartesian predecessors who were also the chief source of many of his other philosophical theories.[1]

1. It will not be out of place to attract here the reader's attention to the use made by Berkeley of the principle of causality in his 'proof' of the existence of other

finite spirits. It will be easily seen that the assumption that 'every event must have a cause' is at the base of the argument. With Locke and Berkeley it was an intellectual necessity of the reason, while Hume later on attempted unsuccessfully to repudiate it.

Berkeley argued that the finite spirits whose existence is inferred from their alleged activities are like our own self, and that hence they too are 'simple indivisible, incorporeal spiritual substances'. But it has already been shown in the previous chapter that his description of his own self in the above terms is erroneous; whence it naturally follows that the other spirits too are not what Berkeley represents them to be.

CHAPTER III.

THE INFINITE SPIRIT.

It is said—and, correctly indeed—that the conception of God is far more important in the philosophy of Berkeley than in that of his immediate predecessor, Locke. In the Berkeleyan philosophy we are, as it were, every moment in direct contact with the Divine Mind and we move and have our very being in Him. He, and not any inert senseless matter, is the *immediate* cause of our ideas, as He is also the ultimate cause of all our volitions. What proof does Berkeley offer for our belief in the existence of such an all-important being as the Infinite Spirit? With him, it should be noted in the very beginning, the knowledge of the Infinite Being, as is the case with all the other spirits, is mediate and inferential. To philosophers like Spinoza and Shankaracharya, the knowledge of the Infinite Spirit is obtained not by a mediate process of inference but by a direct intuition—some sort of mystical contact with the ultimate reality. To Berkeley on the contrary it is an inference from effect to cause.

According to Berkeley our knowledge of God is inferential.

Berkeley states his proof of the existence of God in two parts. "We perceive a continual

succession of ideas; some are anew excited, others are changed or totally disappear. There is therefore some Cause of these ideas, whereon they depend, and which produces and changes them. That this cause cannot be any quality, or idea, or combination of ideas is clear from the preceding section. It must therefore be a substance; but it has been shewn that there is no corporeal or material substance: it remains therefore that the cause of ideas is an incorporeal active substance or Spirit."[1] It is so far proved that *some* spirit must be the cause of our ideas. But spirits are either finite or infinite. Berkeley therefore comes particularly to the existence of the Infinite Spirit in the latter part of his argument. "But though there be some things which convince us *human* agents are concerned in producing them, yet it is evident to every one that those things which are called the Works of Nature—that is, the far greater part of the ideas or sensations perceived by us—are not produced by, or dependent on, the wills of *men*. There is therefore some other Spirit that causes them; since it is repugnant they should subsist by themselves."[2] Some Infinite Spirit therefore exists. Further, "if we attentively consider the constant regularity, order, and concatenation of natural things," as well as their surprising beauty,

His proof of God's existence.

1. *Principles* s. 26.
2. *Ibid* s. 146.

magnificence, harmony, exquisite perfection and all such other attributes, we shall be convinced that the Infinite Spirit can be *One* and only one, and is to be identified with what is otherwise called God, the Omnipotent, Eternal, Infinitely wise and Good Divine Being. We may thus epitomise the entire argument of Berkeley in this respect: Everybody perceives each moment innumerable ideas in well-ordered succession. There must be some cause of all this. It can not be inert ideas, fictitious matter, or the finite spirits. It must then be the Infinite Spirit. Further, the order and uniformity in the world shows that there must be only one such Infinite Spirit, and that One is God. Berkeley believes, it must be mentioned in addition, that our inference of the existence of God is of the same sort as that of the existence of the finite spirits.

Three assumptions involved in the Berkeleyan proof.

Here it is obvious even on a first glance that Berkeley's proof as outlined above depends on a number of assumptions. It assumes in the first place the axiom of causality. To a sceptic like Hume who believed that an event need *not* have a cause, the proof may not appeal at all. It assumes, in the next place, that matter is non-existent, and that the ideas are all inert and powerless. A man who disbelieves Berkeley's theory of the total non-existence of matter,

and, who, further, is willing to assign some *real* causality to it, may not quite agree with the proof of God's existence in the form in which Berkeley gives it. It assumes, lastly, that God possessses consciousness, will, intelligence, and other qualities *in the same sense* in which we attribute these to the finite spirits.

(i) The axiom of causality.

Now, an assumption is not *per se* vicious, and though some of the assumptions in the above Berkeleyan proof of the existence of God are unwarranted, others are admissible and in a sense even indispensable. The axiom of causality belongs to the latter class. Though Hume doubted this axiom, it is well-known how his attempt to do away with it ended in a miserable failure. Human knowledge is impossible unless we assume that every event must have a cause; and Berkeley can not be criticised in this respect. We all believe that whatever we experience must necesarily have some cause. Even if it is all but an illusion and an appearance, there must be some cause of the appearance of such a grand illusion to us.

(ii) The total non-existence of matter.

When we come to the second assumption, however, we shall find many who would gladly disagree with our author. All do not disbelive in the existence of matter, and it is doubtful if Berkeley him-

self was justified and consistent in his total rejection of any material substance whatsoever. Most of us do believe in the independent existence of material substance and take *that* to be the *immediate* cause of all our experience, and not the Divine Spirit. But though we may criticise on these lines this particular point in Berkeley's argument, the exact force and effect of our criticism must be carefully noted; it being not so much the conclusion reached, as only a minor detail of the argument that is hereby affected. For, those who believe in Matter may—and mostly do—nevertheless believe in God, only arguing a step further that there must be some one to create the unconscious matter itself.

(iii) The Analogy between the finite spirits and the Infinite Being.

The first of the three assumptions, we saw, was sound and unassailable; the second sound in conclusion though wrong in detail of the argument; the third, we shall see, is most unsound in both ways. Our belief in the existence of God is *not* exactly on a par with that in the finite spirits. Berkeley's analogical argument of God's existence, it has been maintained, is weak and unjustified and it evoked criticism even from the hands of his contemporaries like Browne who maintained that to ascribe to the Divine Being consciousness, will, intelligence and such other attributes in

the same sense as we do to the human spirits is equal to attributing to Him hands, feet and such other human senses. And though, in this refusal to attribute to God *human* consciousness, will etc, Berkeley smelt nothing but atheism, others may not. It is not all who believe in God's existence that also believe that he has consciousness or will or knowledge just as a human being is said to have these.[1]

Berkeley's belief in the alleged analogy between the Infinite Spirit and the finite ones is not, however, limited to his view regarding the nature and attributes of these two; he believes, further, that even the process by which we obtain our knowledge of the existence of the Infinite Spirit bears

1. Berkeley's own views regarding this particular point may be gathered clearly from the following passages. "We may, therefore," concludes *Crito* (representing Berkeley) "consistently with what has been premised, affirm that all sorts of perfection which we can conceive in a finite spirit are in God, but without any of that allay—(i.e alloy)—which is found in the Creatures."—*Fourth Dialogue* s. 21. And again, in still plainer words, "But for your part, *Alciphron*, you have been convinced fully that God is a thinking intelligent being *in the same sense with other spirits*; though not in the same imperfect manner or degree." (last italics mine).—*Ibid* s. 22. This is virtually to reduce the difference between the divine and the human attributes to one of *degree alone*.

a close analogy to the one by which the knowledge of the existence of other finite spirits besides our own selves is obtained by us. And it is just this contention of Berkeley's—that our knowledge of the existence of the Infinite Spirit is after the same manner as that of the finite ones—which is specially referred to when it is maintained that according to Berkeley " God speaks to all men through the data of their senses, as one man to another through spoken words ".[1] The quotation compares the knowledge we have of the existence of the Infinite Spirit with the knowledge we have of the other finite spirits besides our own self. Our knowledge of all spirits—finite as well as infinite—is, as we have previously seen, on Berkeley's principles, mediate and inferential. The perfect order in the universe i. e. in the ideas that we constantly perceive—and the fact that neither matter, nor the ideas, nor lastly the finite spirits themselves can be their cause—proves *by inference* the existence of God. In like manner, we infer the existence of other men from the results of their activities, the like of which have been the results of our own.

'God *speaks* to us just as a fellow-man does'

1 Fraser: *Berkeley and Spiritual Realism*, p. 30. See also Berkeley's own *Alciphron, or the Minute Philosopher, Fourth Dialogue*, on *Divine Visual Language*, s. 6, closing sentence. (*Selections* p. 231)

Now, this analogy between our knowledge of God or the Infinite Spirit and of our next door neighbour strikes incredulously in the ears of the ordinary man. The common-sense man can not believe that we *infer* the existence of other finite spirits, just as we infer the existence of the Infinite Spirit, or what is the same thing, that we *see* God just as we see our neighbour or friend. To the ordinary man, while the evidence of Divine existence is mediate, that of our neighbour's is direct and immediate. We *see* a man, though *infer* God. How can the two cases resemble ?

Berkeley, however, as said above, maintains in clear terms that we *see* God just as we see a man. It is interesting to examine the grounds on which he maintains this apparantly curious proposition. The whole discussion turns on the meaning we give to the word 'man'. What do I mean when I say that I *see* before me the *man* Vasant ? Do I perceive the inner, thinking, spiritual substance, which is the real 'man' ? On the contrary, do I not actually perceive only a certain combination of a physical shape, colour, form, and such attributes ? I see, in other words, only the *body* of the man Vasant, while as for the existence of the inner spiritual principle, that is only *inferred* from the outword sense-data. But then, do we not infer in the same way the existence of the Infinite Spirit too

What is a *man*?

from the entire sense-date presented to us in this vast universe ? And if we may yet be allowed to say that we *see* and hear the *man*, may we not also say that we *see* and *hear* the Infinite Spirit too ? It is in this sense that Berkeley maintains that " God speaks to all men through the data of their senses as one man to another through spoken words". [1]

Berkeley thus argues in the *Fourth Dialogue* : " It seems to me that though I cannot with eyes of flesh behold the invisible God, yet I do in the strictest sense behold and perceive by all means such signs and tokens, effects and operations, as demonstrate an invisible God—as certainly, and with the same evidence, at least, as any other signs, perceived by sense, do suggest to me the existence of your soul, spirit or thinking principle; which I am convinced of only by a few signs or effects, and the motions of one small organised body : whereas I do at all times and in all places perceive sensible signs which evince the being of God. "

Alciphron, the minute philosopher, is not however satisfied with this and his doubts find a further expression. " I have found, " he rejoins " that

1. The whole point is made quite clear by Berkeley in his *Fourth Diologue* —on Divine Visual Language- s, 5 to 8. The student is specially referred to *selections* pp. 229-32.

nothing so much convinces me of the existence of another person as *his speaking to me*... (But) You will not, I suppose, pretend that God speaks to man in the same clear and sensible manner as one man doth to another ? " Berkeley's answer is quite easy. It is soon admitted by Alciphron that 'speaking' signifies nothing else than "the intervention and use of arbitrary, outward, sensible signs, having no resemblance or necessary connection with the things they stand for and suggest : " provided that, "by innumerable combination of these signs, an endless variety of things is discovered and made known to us; and that we are thereby instructed or informed in their different natures; that we are taught and admonished what to shun, and what to pursue; and are directed how to regulate our motions, and how to act with respect to things distant from us, as well in time as place."[1] Now, it was an easy task for Berkeley to show that if this is what human language and speech means, God may also be said in exactly this sense to be speaking to us just as one man does to another.

the above contention of Berkeley, then, we have seen, means in short this: that neither the finite spirits nor the Infinite one, according to Berkeley, can be perceived directly and actually, our knowledge in both cases being only mediate, a result of

1. *Fourth Dialogue*, s. 7.

inference from the effect to cause; and that the process by which we are said to obtain our knowledge regarding their existence is in both cases exactly the same, the existence of a spirit being inferred by us from the sense-data that we immediately perceive.[1]

We may further note two more points of resemblance between our inference of the existence of the finite spirits and that of the Infinite One. In the first place both presuppose a belief in the axiom of causality. A strong belief that 'every event must have some cause' is the first essential condition of all such inference. 'It is repugnant to reason,' says Berkeley, to think that our ideas can come into existence without any cause whatsoever. Secondly, the inferences as drawn actually by Berkeley presuppose in both cases a belief in the orderliness and rationality of the universe. If I do not believe in these attributes of the universe, I may as well suppose that all the activities–sounds, motions, and all other changes—that I perceive around me either in the body of my neighbour or in other external

1. "Hence it is plain *we do not see a man* – if by *man* is meant that which lives, moves, perceives, and thinks as we do—but only such a certain collection of ideas as directs us to think there is a distinct principle of thought and motion, like to ourselves, accompanying and represented by it. *And after the same manner we see God.*"–*Principles* s. 148.

things, are the results only of physiological causes and reflex actions; and need not presuppose any such spiritual, conscious, invisible being as is inferred, or rather, as remarked above, assumed by Berkeley; while the same is also true of the inference of the existence of God, as it too is equally impossible in the form in which Berkeley draws it without assuming previously a belief in the rationality of the universe.

Notwithstanding these few points of similarity, however, Berkeley's present argument from analogy suffers once again from a very serious defect that altogether invalidates it. Our inferences regarding the existence of other finite spirits and that of the Infinite spirit differ in one very essential respect and are not exactly on par. Apart from the common factor of the spirit who makes the inference, there are involved in an inference of the existence of other finite spirits, three distinct elements; the result of the alleged spirit's activities—a box, to take Berkeley's own example; the *body* of the inferred spirit; and lastly the spirit itself. While, in the second sort of inference which Berkeley alleges to be analogical with the above, two factors alone appear to be involved—the sensedata perceived directly by us and declared to be the result of the activities of the alleged Infinite Spirit, and secondly this Spirit itself. Now, what is there in the latter sort of

inference that would correspond with the second of the three factors involved in the former—viz the physical *body* accompanying the spirit ?[1] There are two most vital and essential differences between the physical body that is declared to be the visible representation of a finite spirit, and this vast universe that is the visible representation of the Infinite Spirit. In the first place, while the universe is admitted to be the *effect* of God's activity, the body can *not* be said to be an effect of the activity of the spirit occupying it. I can neither have a single hair more on my head at my sweet will, nor can I ever hope to check a single throb of my heart. It was not *I* who created this body of mine. But secondly, the vast universe perceived by us differs is one more essential respect from the body of a finite spirit as well as the effects of his activity from which Berkeley would have us infer his existence. The body of a finite spirit can certainly continue to exist

1. Even in those cases where the existence of the other finite spirits is inferred from the motions in their bodies, and where therefore, it may be argued, the first factor is eliminated thus leaving behind only two, it should be noted that the two factors thus left behind do not correspond with the two factors involved in the inference regarding the Infinite Spirit. The motions, in the former case, admittedly occur after all in the *bodies* of the alleged finite spirits. But can we say that the motions perceived in this vast universe occur in the *body* of God ? The same question thus crops up again.

even when the 'inner spiritual principle' within it has disappeared; and the box and the table I make today can no doubt continue to exist for years though I am in this universe no more to perceive them. But will Berkeley be prepared to admit that this universe too can continue to exist even though God ceases to perceive it ? It is this most essential difference that is in fact most fatal to Berkeley's attempt at drawing an analogy between our inference regarding the existence of a finite spirit and that regarding the Infinite Spirit. From the sense-data that we perceive in the case of a finite spirit, we infer the existence of an embodied fellow being; our inference in such cases is of an embodied and not of a disembodied spirit. Shall we apply strictly the alleged analogy to God in this respect also ?[1] We conclude, therefore, that in spite of his plausible analogical argument, Berkeley has nevertheless failed to establish the validity of his favorite contention that 'God speaks to man in the same clear and sensible manner as one man doth to another.'

1. In fact, Berkeley himself has repudiated in clear terms the view that the universe should be regarded as the *body* of God. "We are embodied, that is, we are clogged by weight, and hindered by resistance. But in respect of a perfect spirit, there is nothing hard or impenetrable : there is no resistance to the Deity : nor hath he any body: nor is the supreme Being united to the world as the soul of an animal is to its body."—*Siris*, s. 290.

Let us, however, pass on to consider this problem from a slightly different aspect. After all, what does the alleged analogy prove? How can it prove that God is perfect, immortal or infinite? On what grounds does Berkeley rest his belief in these and the other unique attributes of God? He can not believe in these if he also believes that our knowledge of the existence of God is on a par with that of the finite spirits; for we never believe that a finite spirit is perfect or infinite, as we do in the case of God. And besides, what does the causal argument really arrive at? Does it 'prove' that the cause and creator of all this *must* be perfect, or even good and benevolent? So far as that particular argument really goes, the creator of the world may equally be a bad or a malevolent being, may be liable to death when this world perishes as the soul is believed by some to die when the body dissolves, and may even be an untrustworthy and an imperfect immoral being. The fact is, that while Berkeley's argument can really prove only that *some* creator exists, all further statements of his concerning the nature of this creator are *not so much proved as assumed*. "Eternity, omnipotence, perfect trustworthyness, and goodness" writes Fraser, "all presuppose other grounds, either in faith or in reason, than those expressed in the empirical argument from

What does the analogy really prove?

analogy."[1] And again, as he maintains elsewhere, "The revelation of the existence of supreme Mind or Power, which is given in the intermittent existence of sensible things in sentient creatures, seems, at best, evidence of the existence of Deity only so long as this universe of actual and guaranteed sensations lasts. It does not show the inherent absoluteness, universality, and Necessity of Mind."[2]

Here we may find a suitable place to pass over to a slightly different question. Is it ever possible to give an absolutely conclusive 'proof' of God's existence? Is the above a defect of Berkeley's proof only, or is it one that besets all attempts at proving by means of reasoning the existence of God? Can Reason, in other words, totally dispense with Faith in establishing our belief in God's existence? Questions like these may now be safely answered in the negative, as our belief in the existence of an omnipotent perfect, infinite, benevolent, one, divine being is *not* grounded *entirely* on reasoning alone. Kant in Europe and Shankaracharya in India have proved that to establish our belief in the existence of an

The work of Reason and Faith in creating our belief in God.

1. "*Berkeley*", by Fraser. (Blackwood's Philosophical classics). p. 167.

2. "*Life and Letters of Berkeley*," p. 378.

omnipotent benevolent God solely by means of the Reason is hardly possible. Faith—not blind faith of course—must essentially supplement Reason in these ultimate problems of philosophy. It is notorious how one writer after another advances a well-reasoned argument in support of God's existence, and another coming after him, finds holes in it. For those who believe in direct contact with God, immediate experience of such sort is of course the best proof that can ever be given; but for the vast majority of mankind, however, who unlike the chosen few are not favoured with an opportunity to have an actual vision of the Divine Reality,—for this mass of ordinary humanity, faith must essentially supplement the rational faculty in man, so far as the ultimate problems of metaphysical investigation are concerned. The realm of Faith begins where that of Reason ends, and far from being antagonistic, the former is really to be the crown of the latter. A man of Reason who lacks all Faith is as useless to offer a satisfactory consolation to the commonsense man as is the orthodox dogmatist who depending solely upon Faith attempts to do away with all Reason whatsoever.

A discussion of the concept of God as contained in the philosophy of Berkeley will certainly be inadequate without a critical consideration of the place that he assigns to this concept in his scheme

of the universe. With Locke, while God was the ultimate creator and maintainer of all that exists and ever existed, Matter was nevertheless admitted to be the *immediate* cause of the innumerable inanimate objects perceived every moment by us. Berkeley, on the other hand, assigns to God, as the reader must be knowing fairly well by this time, the duty that his predecessor had assigned to Matter, in addition to the one that the latter himself had assigned to Him. In the scheme of this universe as construed by the great Immaterialist, God is not only the *ultimate* creator, maintainer, and the destroyer of all the things and beings ever found in this universe, but their *immediate* cause as well. He creates the finite subjects that perceive, as well as the inert objects that are perceived. We have, every moment, a direct connection with our Creator, without the intervention of any *tertium quid* of inert senseless matter. The beautiful objects, the constant order, the benevolent 'laws of nature', all owe their existence and maintainance directly to the will of the Infinite Spirit. It is He who creates the speculative minds of the philosopher and the poet, that soaring high in the heavens conceive great and beautiful thoughts, and it is the same God that also creates the pen and the ink that serve as instruments in translating the thoughts in written language. It is not that the

The concept of God in the philosophy of Berkeley.

clouds *cause* the rain that falling on an opportune time fills the cultivator's heart with thankful joy and his purse with silver pieces; the fact is rather that the Infinite Omnipotent Being first causes the idea of the clouds in the finite minds, and then out of His overflowing goodness and boundless love, makes the idea of rain—an idea which in itself has no causal or necessary connection whatsoever with that of the clouds—merely *follow* it. He alone is the true cause in the real sense of the word, the finite spirits being only relative causes, while the inert ideas can be said to cause any thing only in a metaphorical sense.

Hume and Locke on our knowledge of Spirit and Matter.

It is doubtful, however, whether in this amalgamation of the two distinct substances—the material and the spiritual—into one single substance, Berkeley had really made any advance over the position of Locke and others. With the commonsense man, while the material substance is the direct and immediate cause of the objects of external perception, the spiritual substance is their final and ultimate cause. Berkeley, on the contrary, is disposed to conclude that while the latter sort of substance must be accepted, the former does not really exist, and any conception of it involves a contradiction and a repugnancy. But what grounds has he for this preference that he gives to the one

over the other? Has he any more positive idea of the one than that of the other? It is interesting to observe, in this connection, the views of Locke, his immediate predecessor, and of Hume, his immediate successor in the field of metaphysical speculations. Comparing our ignorance as regards both the substances, Hume observes: "We are ignorant,it is true, of the manner in which *bodies* operate on each other; *their* "force" or "energy" is entirely incomprehensible. But are we not equally ignorant of the manner or force in which the Supreme Mind operates either on itself or on body? Whence, I beseech you, do we acquire any idea of this?..... Were our ignorance therefore a good reason for rejecting anything, we should be led into denying all energy in the Supreme Being as much as in the grossest matter. We surely comprehend as little the operations of the one as of the other. All we know is our profound ignorance in both cases."[1] Locke is no less emphatic on this point than Hume. "Pure Spirit, viz., God," he writes in the *Essay*, "is only active; pure matter is only passive; those beings that are both active and passive, we may judge to partake of both. But be that as it will, I think we have as many and as clear ideas belonging to spirit as we have belonging to body, *the substance of each being equally unknown to us.*"[2] And again, "So

1. *Inquiry concerning Human Understanding*, s. VII.
2. *Essay*, II, xxiii, 28. (Italics mine).

that, in short, the idea we have of spirit, compared with the idea we have of body, stands thus: The substance of spirit is unknown to us; and so is the substance of body equally unknown to us."[1] And if at all "We could explain them any farther, one is as easy as the other. So that we are no more able to discover wherein the ideas belonging to body consist, than those belonging to spirit."[2]

We may therefore conclude on the whole that Berkeley's God, in so far as it is declared to be the *immediate* cause of all the innumerable objects of external perception—in so far, that is, as it is offered as a substitute in place of the usually supposed material substance—is little more different from Locke's exploded Matter than in mere terminology and mode of expression.[3] Berkeley can give little more account of his Spiritual Being than that it is the immediate cause of all the ideas ever perceived by us; and this account of his differs in fact but little from the account that the ordinary man gives of Matter. It is true that he appears to hint at one place that he can form *some* positive idea (i. e.

1. *Ibid*, II, xxiii, 30.
2. *Ibid*, II, xxiii, 29.
3. For adequate arguments in support of this conclusion, and for a critical consideration of the Spiritual Substance offered by Berkeley as a substitute for Locke's material one, *vide*, *supra*, Book II, chap. I. pp. 102—08. Cf. also, Taylor, *Elements of Metaphysics* p. 65.

notion, to use his particular terminology), though most inadequate, of this Infinite Spiritual Being;[1] but what that positive idea precisely is, and what grounds can be asserted in support of any such assumption, he takes little troubles to explain further and develop in details. And besides, such inadequate notions might easily be claimed even by the materialists with regard to the conception of matter so vehemently defended by them.

It will certainly be well for us to clear, before we close this chapter, one important point regarding the philosophy of Berkeley. He believed, as we have already seen by this time, in the plurality of spirits, and differed therefore from philosophers like Spinoza, according to whom the finite spirits are not, in the ultimate sense, different from God. Berkeley cannot therefore be described as a *singularist* though he may certainly be classified as a *monist*. The terms monism and singularism are often unwittingly confused by students of philosophy, though there is an interesting difference between the two. The term singularism is opposed to 'pluralism', and concerns itself chiefly with the *number of the spirits* believed to have real existence in this universe; while by monism is connoted that theory according to which only

Berkeley, a monist, but not a singularist.

1. *Fourth Dialogue*, s. 21; and *Third Dialogue* s. 42.

one element—*either* matter *or* spirit—has existence in the real ultimate sense. Now, Berkeley, as is well known, denied all existence to Matter and maintained strongly that the Spirit alone exists. Whatever exists, he concludes, is ultimately spiritual in essence, and nothing that appears to be material has any real independent existence. He was therefore a monist though not a singularist, in as much as he maintained strongly at the same time the individuality of the finite spirits, and cannot, therefore, be said to have merged, like Spinoza, the finite individuals into the One Infinite All-embracing Divine Being.[1]

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1. For a brief exposition of Berkeley's views on the relation between the finite spirits and the Infinite one, see *infra* appendix B.

CHAPTER IV.

THE NATURAL IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL.

The problem of the immortality of the soul occupies really such an important position in the history of philosophical speculations, that it may well be said to be to philosophy what the touch-stone and the nector have been to the physical sciences. Metaphysics is generally supposed to be an obstruse subject dealing with arid and uninteresting topics. Nevertheless, of those not very many problems in metaphysics which are of considerable interest to the ordinary man, and which have supplied the chief motive to metaphysical inquiries, that of the immortality of the soul is a prominent one and has an important bearing on the entire course of human life. The breast of the ordinary reader of a metaphysical treatise heaves with intense interest and expectant curiosity when he arrives at the discussion of the problem of the immortality of his own soul. Is the soul immortal or does it die? Is it different from the body? Does it survive the mortal frame that imprisons it? Or is it destroyed simultaneously with its material companion? Does it, on the other hand, survive the physical death and yet perish in some other manner? Problems like these, when once suggested in earnestness, never really leave a man's mind in rest till they are answered to his satisfaction.

Berkeley's doctrine of the immortality of the soul.

The problem of the immortality of the soul is very intimately connected with that of its nature and existence. To those who understand by a finite spirit nothing but a modification of matter that composes the physical body, the soul is of course mortal. As for Berkeley, he, as we have already seen, believed that a spirit is some 'simple, indivisible, incorporeal substance', that is independent of the material body and is only accidentally united with it. Since the nature and the existence of the soul is thus held by Berkeley to be quite different from and independent of that of the physical bodies, it was easily concluded by him that any change or motion in the latter could not possibly affect the incorporeal soul. "We have shown" writes Berkeley in this connection, "that the soul is indivisible, incorporeal, unextended, and it is consequently incorruptible. Nothing can be plainer than that the motions, changes, decays, and dissolutions which we hourly see befall natural bodies (and which we mean by the *course of nature*) can not possibly affect an active, simple, uncompounded substance: such a being is therefore indissoluble by the force of nature that is to say—the soul of man is *naturally* immortal."[1] Since death is but a physical phenomenon consisting only of some changes in the material body,

1. *Principles* s. 141.

and further, since the soul is already assumed on Berkeley's principles to be 'incorporeal' and completely different from the physical 'tabernacle' wherein it is enclosed and which consequently can not be affected in any manner by the motions or changes in the physical body, it follows as a necessary consequence that the soul remains unaltered by the phenomenon vulgarly called death and continues to remain after it in the same state as before. The physical laws of matter and motion, which we indicate by the name 'natural laws', can not cause the destruction of the incorporeal indivisible soul. Its course of existence remains unaffected by any changes or motions in this physical world or *nature*. It is in this sense that Berkeley concludes that "The Natural Immortality of the Soul is a necessary consequence of the foregoing doctrine".[1] And so far

1. The words "Natural Immortality of the Soul" are rather ambiguous and give much trouble to the beginner, especially as Berkeley uses them in a special peculiar sense. They can connote two very different meanings. In one sense, they may mean "that the soul is by *its* very *nature* immortal; that its very nature or constitution is such that it is impossible for it ever to perish." Johnston, in his *Development of Berkeley's Philosophy*, seems to accept this meaning when he thus expounds Berkeley's doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul: "The existence of the body makes no difference to the existence of the soul; immortallity is perfectly *natural*....On this basis- the

as this remark goes Berkeley appears undoubtedly to be in the right; for assuming, as he does, that the

impossibility of disproof—Berkeley rests the assertion that the soul is necessarily and naturally immortal, i. e, is a necessarily and eternally percipient being." (*Development etc*, pp. 353—54). But there is another meaning of this same phrase different from this. According to this sense, the same words may connote the doctrine that "The soul is immortal or imperishable so far as the *natural* laws--that is, the laws of matter and motion that govern the changes and motions in the *physical nature*--are concerned. The soul may, however, be destroyed by a *supernatural* agency whom the 'natural' laws are powerless to bind and restrict." Now, it appears plain to me that Berkeley's meaning in employing the words in question was the latter and not the former. "It must not be supposed" writes Berkeley while explainfng the meaning of thc phrase 'Natural Immortality of the Soul', "It must not be supposed that they who assert the natural immortality of the soul are of opinion that it is absolutely incapable of annihilation even by the infinite power of the Creator who first gave it being, but only that it is not liable to be broken or dissolved by the ordinary laws of nature or motion." (*Principles* s. 141). However much Berkeley may extol the superiority of the finite spirits over the 'inert ideas' of perception, he will never compromise even a bit the omnipotence of the Infinite Spirit. In the above phrase, then, he uses the word 'natural' in antithesis to 'supernatural'. The reader should carefully note the following additional points of difference between the two meanings which should not be but are often confused: (i) according to the former meaning the

soul is entirely unaffected by physical changes, and that death is nothing but a change in the physical bodies, it certainly follows as a natural consequence that it is incapable of destruction at the hands of the natural laws. So far as supernatural powers are concerned Berkeley maintained in plain words that the soul can certainly be destroyed by God or the Infinite Spirit whenever He wishes it.

Some objections. Are spirits really disembodied?

Berkeley's doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul, as outlined above, is, however, open to some grave objections which have already been hinted at in a previous chapter. The above doctrine of Berkeley's rests obviously on his assumption that a spirit is a 'simple, incorporeal, indivisible

word 'natural' refers to the nature or constitution of the soul itself; in the latter, to the nature or constitution of the external 'material' universe of perception. (ii) The former is liable to the interpretation that the soul is *absolutely* immortal—indestructible by changes or motions in the inert ideas as we well as by the will of the Infinite Spirit; the latter distinctly means that the soul is immortal only so far as the natural laws of matter and motion are concerned, but not despite a supernatural act on the part of the Omnipotent God. Though Johnston interprets Berkeley's doctrine in the former sense, it appears plain that Berkeley himself had in his mind the second meaning, and that consequently, by the 'Natural immortality of the Soul' he indicated the theory

incorruptible spiritual substance', which is independent of and is entirely unaffected by changes in the physical bodies. But is this assumption ultimately tenable? Is he justified in basing his whole philosophy on this unproved assumption regarding the nature of the finite spirits?

Finite spirits are known according to the principles of Berkeley in two manners: one's own spirit or self is known by immediate intuition, while the other finite spirits are known by analogical inference from our own existence. Now, as already explained in a previous chapter, the self which is the subject of every man's immediate intuition is not an entity which may be described in the words in which Berkeley describes it. We are not conscious of an incorporeal being; our idea of the self, on the contrary, consists, in large proportions, of our bodily associations. Besides, our ordinary intuition is never of a self that is nothing but itself. Every such experience of the self involves the corrosponding idea of the not-self. If, then, Berkeley has never an experience of the self which does not at the same time involve the idea of a not-self, how and what can he know of

that the soul being incorporeal and hence incapable of being affected by the physical changes, can not be destroyed by the ordinary natural laws of physical universe, though it may certainly be destroyed by a Divine miracle or some other fiat of God.

the exclusive nature of the self apart from all other things and beings? Further, the self is not necessarily a 'simple, uncompounded' substance; for, our self, as modern psychology rightly insists, is an entity that constantly changes and is therefore capable of development or evolution. The chief point, however, is that since we are conscious only of an embodied existence, Berkeley's statement that the self is independent of and can continue to exist unaffected apart from the body, remains at best only an hypothesis or assumption that, being contrary to all our ordinary experience, requires strong proof before it can be accepted.

The existence of the other finite spirits is known by us, according to Berkeley, by analogical inference. We shall not here ask whether we can be conscious of our own self without at the same time being conscious of the existence of other finite spirits.[1] Supposing for a moment that this is possible and that our knowledge of other spirits is really as Berkeley alleges only inferential, we shall yet ask the further question as to what precisely is that which we come to know as a result of this inference. Can we legitimately infer thereby the existence of a being who is simple, indivisible and so on? Berkeley himself admits that the inference

1. This question has been sufficiently discussed in Bk. III chapter I.

leads us to the knowledge of other spirits only as *resembling our own self*. But it has been already shown that in the case of our own self we are conscious only of an embodied existence, and not of an incorporeal simple being that is absolutely independent of the physical bodies. How can we, then, infer legitimately in other bodies the existence of such a simple incorporeal indivisible substance?

Our knowledge of the finite spirits, in either ways, is thus always of embodied existences. The finite spirits that we are conscious of are very intimately connected with the bodies that surround them. Referring to the assumption of complete independence of the body and soul, so common among the philosophers and theologians of the seventeenth century and afterwards, Fraser remarks, "This train of thought is more foreign to the present generation, when science insists that selfconscious life in constant correlation with corporeal frame is a fact proved by sufficient induction; whatever may be the abstract metaphysical possibility of conceiving the conscious being to exist independently of body. The only personal life we have any experience of, it is argued, is one that is found in organic union with the corporeal structure, in correlation with which it develops. Speculations like those of Berkeley and Butler would be condemned as dreams"[1]. Though

1. *Selections*, p. 137, footnote.

all of us may not 'condemn' the Berkeleyan doctrine of the continued existence of the soul after the dissolution of the body, we may certainly declare that it is at best only an hypothesis that *he* simply assumes and gives no adequate proof of.

But besides the above there is a somewhat different objection that may also be brought against the above doctrine of Berkeley's. Supposing we accept with Berkeley that even after death the soul continues to exist notwithstanding the fact that its material companion has been dissolved, will it necessarily follow that the *same* self that lived before now continues to exist? As Laird correctly maintains,[1] if personal immortality is to have any meaning, the self that is said to continue after death must be the same as that which lived before it. If its entire experience and its attitude towards existence are radically changed in the disembodied state of existence, can we say that *it*, the *same* self that lived before, continues to exist and is immortal? If the ends and purposes of the soul when it enjoyed the companionship of the material tabernacle have nothing in common with those of its discarnate state of existence, may we not say that it is not the same but a different soul that is alleged

Will Berkeley's disembodied self be the *same* as the embodied one?

1. *The Idea of The Soul*, by John Laird, chapter IX, on Personal Immortality.

to exist after the death of the physical body? We have found that the self of which all of us have an immediate intuition, and of which therefore Berkeley must be supposed to be speaking throughout his philosophy, is made up largely of our relations with the wordly things, and our associations with our bodies as well as our companion souls. "It seems very easy" writes Berkeley in one of his letters to Johnson, "To conceive the *soul* to exist (after death) in a seperate state, and to exercise herself on new ideas—without the intervention of those tangible things we call our bodies." It is true that Berkeley here admits the essential element of the not-self (that is, the objective factor in all experience) corrosponding to the disembodied self; but if this not-self (the "new ideas") of the discarnate self is absolutely different from the not-self of the incarnate one, the corrosponding selves must also differ in an equal degree. The moment the former not-self vanishes, the self, which is conscious of itself only in its relation to the not-self, vanishes also, with all its former associations, relations and conative purposes;[1] or at least it changes to such a degree

1. Cf. Taylor: "Unless the 'soul' continued to live for aims and interests teleologically continuous with those of its earthly life, there would be no genuine extension of our self-hood beyond the grave. Hence any kind of evidence for the continued existence which is not at the same time evidence for the continuity of interests and purposes, is really worthless when offered as testimony to 'Immortality'." (*Elements of metaphysics*, p. 356).

that it no more continues to be the *same* self Here, if Berkeley or any other philosopher were to agrue that notwitstanding the fact that the relations and the interests change, the indivisible, incorporeal, spiritual *substance* which is the substratum of all these remains yet the same, it may be replied that such an abstract substance we are not conscious of in any of our immediate intuitions which however constitute with Berkeley and the Cartesian philosophers the entire direct proof of the existence of the self. Such a substance would appear to be as much a result of empty abstraction as the material substance which Berkeley so vigorously attacked.

The ethical and moral considerations advanced in modern times.

Both the objections turn ultimately on the nature and meaning of the self. As we saw in a previous chapter that Berkeley's account and description of the self which he says we all have an immediate intuition of was erroneous, so we have here seen that his account of the 'natural immortality of the soul' which is of course based on his account of its nature is also as a consequence erroneous. Modern psychology, holding different views regarding the nature of the self, is agreed, though not in the

positive aspect of the solution of the problem of the immortality of the soul, at least in this, that Berkeley's proof of the 'Natural Immortality of the Soul' is not adequate and convincing by itself. It is now almost unanimously agreed after Kant that the problem of the soul's immortality should be solved more on ethical and moral considerations rather than on any others. Is it not, it is argued, repugnant to our conscience to think that after having spent the entire life in attaining a certain degree of moral and intellectual development, the whole thing should be nullified and reduced to zero at the time of the dissolution of the physical body by the utter destruction of the central conscious being himself who evolved and developed all the life through ? It *is*, for instance, absolutely revolting to our moral feeling to ever imagine that men of the highest moral and spiritual development like Jesus Christ, St. Fransis of Assisi, or Mahatma Gandhi, should be nowhere the moment the earthly tabernacles that are ordinarily assigned the above names dissolve and return back to the respective material elements that composed them. The same is also true of all other men, each of whom is attempting in his own way to ascend the path of moral development, some succeeding to a greater or lesser degree, others, being misdirected, failing knowingly or unknowingly. The conception of the universe in modern western philosophy being one

of an harmonious whole, any such discontinuity of conscious life as is involved in the denial of the survival of the self after the physical death, implies a break in the harmony of the universe and cannot consequently be acceptable as an ultimate fact of truth.[1]

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1. Here I must leave the problem with the reader, as many recognised authors have done, and abstain from any further discussion; both, because it is not quite relevent in a treatise that professes to deal only with the philosophy of Berkeley, as also because, to enter into the maze of the details of the problem under discussion—e. g. the particular state in which the conscious being may continue to exist, and such other allied matters—is dangerous as well as unsafe.

The exact point in which Berkeley's mistake lies deserves, as in the two previous chapters, careful attention on the part of the reader. Here too, it is not so much his conclusion as the particular arguments that he adduced in support of it, that are attacked and proved erroneous. Berkeley attempted to prove that the *same* self of which all of us have an immediate intuition of is immortal. Here lay precisely the mistake and the weakness of his argument. Indian philosophers, who often agree with him in their conclusions but not the arguments, while maintaining the immortality of the real *Atman*, denied in clear terms that the recipient of this grand privilege of immortality was the self of our ordinary experience, the self of which all of us are conscious of in every act of perception and

ideation. It is not *this* self, the '*Jiva*' as it is called, that lives eternally, but the other real self, the *Atman*. Berkeley's confusion between these two was at once the source of his mistake and of the attack directed by modern psychology against him.

BOOK IV.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

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CHAPTER I.

WAS BERKELEY A SUBJECTIVE IDEALIST?

Idealism and Realism.

The problem of matter occupies really a unique position in the speculative discussions of metaphysicians. It is chiefly their view regarding the nature of the external things perceived by us that brings them into conflict with the popular notions. Philosophers are often found to defend vehemently the existence of the inert invisible spiritual principle even though they are unable to have so much as the slightest glance of it; and yet to dispute at the same time the objective external existence of the material things perceived every moment by us by means of each one of our seness. Philosophers are not, however, all of the same type, and, among other important differences, the problems of the reality of the material objects of external perception and those of the nature of the perception process have done much to split the line of philosophers in two. While some maintain with the common sense man that the universe is composed, even in the ultimate sense, of two relatively independent substances, matter and

mind, others believe that the ultimate reality is only spiritual, matter possessing no real existence independent of the spirit. The former are known in philosophical literature, as the reader must be aware by this time, by the name of Realist philosophers while the latter by the name of Idealist philosophers. Berkeley of course, was a truly idealist philosopher and strongly maintained the famous doctrine that the *esse* of a thing is its *percipi*, i. e., the doctrine that the material things of external perception are in essence only spiritual and have no real independent existence apart from the perception on the part of the spirits.

Subjective and Objective Idealism.

Idealism and realism are not, however, so much the names of two particular systems of philosophy as the generic names of two classes of such systems; for each comprehends under itself various particular systems differing in some respects from one another, though held together by means of certain common elements. Thus Idealism may be either representative idealism, subjective or individual idealism, objective or universal idealism, neo-idealism and so on.[1] We are here concerned however mainly with the distinction between the two sorts of idealism known as the subjective and the objective

1. So too is realism of various kinds See Book I chapter II.

idealism. While all idealist systems agree that the reality of matter is spirit-dependent, objective idealism holds that a thing continues to exist so long as *any* spirit is perceiving it, and subjective idealism that each particular thing lasts only so far as the *particular* perception of it by some one *individual* percipient lasts. Thus while the objective idealists hold that this *same* table will exist so long as any spirit is perceiving it, the subjective idealist would say that *this particular* table that I am now perceiving before me will last only so long as *this particular* perception on my part continues to last; and consequently that as soon as the latter ceases and another perception either on my own part or on the part of some other individual percipient begins, the table of the former perception will cease and *another* exactly similar one will come into existence and take its place. It will be easily seen from this that while on the theory of objective idealism different men at the same time and the same man at different times might perceive exactly the *same* thing, on the principles of strictly subjective idealism neither can different men at the same time nor even the same man at different time perceive the *same* thing again, but may perceive only *another* thing resembling it.

Now, it is often a matter of dispute whether the idealism propounded by Berkeley is to be termed subjective or objective. Either of these contradictory

views has received support from eminent critics. Thus while a large number of Berkeley's students and critics regard Berkeley as a subjective idealist, we find Harrold Hoffding, that brilliant professor of Copenhagen, remarking that "He (Berkeley) is an idealist but not a subjective idealist", adding as a reason that "He in no way reduces reality to a mere series of sensations."[1] The fact is that there are passages in Berkeley's treatises to support each of these two views; and it is consequently difficult to give some one definite answer that will apply to the entire Berkeleyan philosophy. We shall however discuss in this chapter passages of both these sorts, and decide as to in whose favour the verdict may on the whole be given. Let the reader therefore carefully keep in mind the subtle *differentia* between these two systems, the test that we shall apply when deciding whether Berkeley is an objective idealist or a subjective one. Our test shall be this: If he were to say that every material thing continues to exist only so far as *some* spirit is perceiving it, he is an objective idealist and his philosophy an objective idealism; but if we find him saying that the *esse* of each particular material object consists in the particular perception

What kind of idealism did Berkeley propound?

1. "*A History of Modern Philosophy*", (Meyer's translation). Vol. I. p. 423.

at that particular moment on the part of some particular percipient spirit, he shall be declared forthwith a subjective idealist.

Berkeley's doctrine that the *esse* of each thing consists in its *percipi* has been the chief stronghold of those whose aim it is to class him as a subjective idealist. Many philosophers who themselves propound the doctrine of subjective idealism point to his doctrine of '*esse* is *percipi*', and proclaim themselves followers of Berkeley. It is therefore worth our while to examine in some detail the exact meaning of this phrase and to see what Berkeley himself meant by it.

Passages in Berkeley which advocate objective idealism.

The doctrine that the *esse* of each thing is its *percipi* means in the first place that the existence of a thing depends upon its being perceived; and since spirits alone have the requisite power to perceive, it means further that the reality of all the things of sense-experience depends upon their being perceived by some spirit. No 'material' thing, according to this theory of Berkeley, has any existence independent of and apart from this perception by some spirit. But we have not so far reached the centre of the discussion. What precisely is meant by this *percipi*? Does it mean perception by *any* spirit or by some particular spirit?

Let us better see in this connection what Berkeley himself has to say regarding this point. He explains the meaning of the term EXIST when applied to sensible things in the following words: "The table I write on I say exists, that is, I see and feel it; and if I were out of my study I should say it existed—meaning thereby that if I was in my study I might perceive it, *or that some other spirit does actually perceive it*.....This is all that I can understand by these and the like expressions."[1] (Italics mine) Now, to my mind, Berkeley has explained his meaning quite clearly in this passage. The words italicised therein will, when carefully noted, leave no doubt in the reader's mind regarding Berkeley's meaning of the phrase '*esse* is *percipi*'. Berkeley states quite clearly that the table – note, the *same* table–will continue to exist so long as *some* spirit, *not necessarily my own*, is perceiving it. The *esse* of the table depends not upon any one particular perception but on all perception in general. The table that I am now seeing before me will cease to exist only when all perception of it whatsoever ceases, and not when my own perception of it alone has ceased. This is just what Berkeley declares in the *Principles* when he says: "As to what is said of the *absolute existence of unthinking things without any relation to their being perceived*, that is to me

1. *Principles*, s. 3.

perfectly unintelligible. Their *esse* is *percipi*."[1] This is certainly not subjective but an objective idealism.

This is, however, by no means the only passage wherein Berkeley has presented himself as an objective idealist. While explaining further the meaning of his remark that the *being* of all those bodies that compose the mighty frame of this world consists in being *perceived* or *known*, he adds: "Consequently so long as they are not actually perceived by me, or do not exist in my mind *or that of any other created spirit*, they must either have no existence at all, *or else subsist in the mind of some Eternal Spirit*–it being perfectly unintelligible, and involving all the absurdity of abstraction, to attribute to any single part of them an existence independent of a spirit."[2] (Italics mine). Berkeley has again clearly declared here that the *esse* of a thing depends upon the *percipi* not of some one particular spirit but of *any* percipient whatsoever. This passage deserves even a more careful notice, in as much as he goes in it much farther in declaring that a thing can continue to exist even when *no finite spirit* is perceiving it, provided that the Infinite Spirit is perceiving it at that time. The proviso may be very easily granted

1. *Ibid* s. 3. Fraser, too, has accepted this very interpretation; see, *inter alia*, his footnote to this section.

2. *Ibid*, s. 6.

in the case of each thing, and Berkeley's position as stated in this passage is, practically speaking, dangerously near the very opinion that he is taking so much trouble to repudiate. In fact, the majority of his opponents will hardly find any thing to complain against, if Berkeley were to declare this as his final view.

But if there is any reader left who is still hesitating regarding Berkeley's real opinion on this point, the following passage, than which nothing can be clearer, may be recommended for his perusal. "For, though we hold indeed the objects of sense to be nothing else but ideas which cannot exist unperceived yet we may not hence conclude they have no existence except only while they are perceived by *us*; since there may be some other spirit that perceives them though we do not. Wherever bodies are said to have no existence without the mind, I would not be understood to mean this or that particular mind, but *all minds whatsoever*"[1] The words that things are nothing but ideas *'in the mind'*, occur very often in Berkeley's philosophy; one is consequently very curious to know the exact meaning of this phrase *'in the mind'*. "I answer" writes Berkeley, "those qualities are *in the mind* only as they are perceived by it—that is not by way of *mode* or *attribute*, but only by way of *idea*".[2]

1. *Principles* s. 48 2. *Ibid* s. 49.

To conclude, the above passages show clearly, what Fraser wants all students of Berkeley to remember, that "the ideas or phenomena of which things are composed, according to Berkeleyan conception, are not, as with Fichte, modifications of the mind to which they are represented, but are, on the contrary, perception-dependent presentations, exhibited under 'laws of nature' in individual minds."[1] That the table is nothing beyond an idea in the mind perceiving it, means no more than that the essence of the table consists in its object–subject relation to the percipient mind. And since one and the same idea can bear this relation at the same time to different subjects, and to the same subject at different times, it follows that at least judged from the above unambiguous passages, Berkeley's philosophy is not a subjective idealism as it is often claimed to be not by the opponents only but often by its supporters too.

Berkeley as a subjective idealist.

Whence, then, the source of the prevalent opinion that Berkeley advocated a subjective and not an objective idealism? Have those who declare with confidence that Berkeley was essentially a subjective idealist and that the main object of his philosophy was to preach that a thing perceived by each percipient is nothing but

1. '*Berkeley*" pp. 80—81.

a cluster of ideas existing *in his own mind and no where else*—have they no arguments to advance in their support? Are they mistaken *in toto*, and is their claim absolutely baseless? It should indeed be a surprising thing if an opinion so widely prevalent among the students of philosophy were after all to be proved utterly baseless.

In truth, however, neither these critics are totally mistaken, nor their claims baseless; for, Berkeley's philosophy does equally contain certain other passages which unmistakably appear to point towards subjective idealism. Having examined the passages that support the other claim, let us now turn with equal care to a consideration of these, so that we may be able to decide the validity of the rival claims. Take, for instance, the following passage from the *Principles*: "Light and colours, heat and cold, extension and figures—in a word the things we see and feel—what are they but so many sensations, notions, ideas, or impressions on the sense? and is it possible to separate, even in thought, any of these from perception? For my part I might as easily divide a thing from itself..... Hence as it is impossible for me to see or feel anything without an actual sensation of that thing, so is it impossible for me to conceive in my thoughts any sensible thing or object distinct from the sensation or perception of it. In truth, the object and the

sensation are the same thing and cannot therefore be abstracted from each other."[1]

Now, such a revolutionary passage as this seems, no doubt, to the ordinary reader to support at once a fullfledged subjective idealism. If an object is nothing different from the sensation of it, and if its existence without and perception within the perceiving mind mean really the same fact, then indeed it follows that an object is absolutely nowhere but (literally) in the mind and that each object is private to each percipient mind at each separate moment, since no two persons—nor the same person at different times-can experience the *same sensation*. Sensations, we have learnt in psychology, are private to each ind vidual, and are, besides, dependent on the perceiving mind for their existence; like wise, they are not permanent but only momentary and fast-perishing entities. Now, if Berkeley really means to identify the object and the sensation, the stimulus and the response, all the obove mentioned qualities of the sensations will as a matter of course be transferred to the objects as well, and Berkeley will forthwith be seen landing in complete subjective idealism.

The most fatal portion is, however, yet to come. Those students of Berkeley who are in favour of

1. *Principles* s. 5.

interpreting his philosophy in terms of objective idealism have not yet received the worst cut. They may do so now. When Berkeley proved, in the *Dialogues*, his well-known formula that things are nothing beyond ideas and further that these ideas are nowhere but in the mind perceiving them, the question naturally cropped up as to whether two persons can then be said to perceive the *same* thing. "The same idea which is in my mind" asks quite pertinently Berkeley's imaginary interlocuter, "can not be in yours or in any other mind. Doth it not therefore follow that no two persons can see the same thing?" The question raised here is a most important one, and Berkeley's attempted solution of it is the unkindest cut of all to those who have been deluded by his former apparently clear professions in favour of objective idealism. Berkeley's answer reduces, to put the whole matter in a nutshell, all sameness in things to mere similarity. When ten persons see the moon what they really perceive, according to the answer that Berkeley has given to this question, is ten numerically *different* though exactly similar moons and *not one and the same* moon. What the 'abstracted notion of identity' connoted by the word 'same' as used in the acceptation of 'philosophers'—what that notion is, Berkeley does not know. As far as he is concerned, he is confident that common people may continue to say that different men perceive the same thing, and

yet, for all that, what the different persons perceive might really be not the *same identical* thing but numerically different though exactly *similar* things. Here, then, Berkeley is in the closest grip of subjective idealism, and it is passages like these that lend support to the view that Berkeley is at bottom a subjective idealist.

This passage virtually reduces to nullity all the former passages that appeared to advocate the opposite view. We have seen how Berkeley maintained in more than one passage that a thing can continue to exist even when I am not perceiving it, provided some other spirit perceives it. That is to say, a thing can be the *same* thing when different spirits perceive it, not only simultaneously but even at different times. But Berkeley now comes on the stage and calmly informs us that what he means by the word 'same' is in reality only '*similar*', and not what the word suggests in ordinary parlance, to wit, perfect numerical identity. And if this is the final verdict of Berkeley, all hopes of regarding him as an objective idealist are doomed for ever.

The apparent conclusion.

After a careful perusal of the above (and other similar) conflicting passages in the philosophical treatises of Berkeley, the reader is apt to conclude that his philosophy really contains within itself two quite distinct lines of thought, one supporting the

doctrine of objective idealism and the other that of subjective idealism. It seems difficult to believe that the ingeneous author of the *Principles of Human Knowledge* was not conscious of this. The passages in which he advocates the objective idealism are as clear and unambiguous as the others; and it follows at any rate that Berkeley's philosophy is not a consistent statement of some one philosophical system. In it are combined Empiricism and Rationalism, subjective idealism and objective idealism.

For, had it really been a consistent statement of some one system of philosophy, either of these two conflicting sets of passages should have disappeared. In fact, the truth appears to be, that at least some of his passages are composed by Berkeley according to the convenience of a particular occasion. When it appeared to him that to admit the numerical identity of a thing which is being simultaneously perceived by diverse percipients, is tantamount to admitting *some* objective universal element in all our experience of external objects, that would naturally be at least in some respects independent of its perception by the spirit, he forthwith declared in unhesitating language that though the 'philosophers' might dispute about the word 'same' and connote by it some 'abstracted notion of identity,' in reality, however, no two persons ever perceive the *same*

thing. The thought never seems to have occured to him that to dissolve all sameness in things in this manner is to close all avenues and destroy all possibilities of any intercommunication between the different spirits. When, however, the fully subjective consequences of this view were presented to his view and he was charged with having subjectified all things, he at once exclaimed that he was not for changing *things* into *ideas* but rather *ideas* into *things*; little judging as to how far his remark in this place would be consistent with his previous reduction of all sameness to mere similarity. When, again, it was objected that according to his new principles the mind will be extended and figured since extension and figure are alleged to exist only 'in the mind,' he was ready with his brave and heroic answer that qualities were said by him to exist '*in the mind*,' "only as they are perceived by it—that is, not by way of *mode* or *attribute*, but only by way of idea;"[1] while the same Berkeley, apparently forgetting his own pervious bold statement, writes while discussing the possible abode of the unknown alleged substance, the following clever passage: "But secondly, though we grant this unknown substance may possibly exist, yet *where* can it be supposed to be ? That it exists not in the *mind* is agreed; and that it exists not in *place* is no less certain—since all place or extension exists only in the mind, as

1. *Principles* s. 47.

hath been already proved. It remains therefore that it exists nowhere at all."[1] What does the passage really mean? Does not its author merely play here upon the words 'in the mind', and use them in quite a different sense than the one claimed in the pious assurance above? The alleged substance is denied any existence in *place* since all place or extension exists *only in the mind*. But does he not here assume as proved that all extension or place is *literally* situated *in the mind*, and that no place is possibly left *outside* the mind where the substance might ever exist? Why else should be deny the so-called unknown substance even a place to exist in?

This is by no means the only occasion when he plays upon the words 'in the mind' using them sometimes in a strictly subjective sense and at others in just the opposite sense according as it suits his purpose. While answering an objection that his principles confuse the actual fire with an idea of it, he compares the case of fire with that of pain. But should he not have first decided whether the fire and the pain are declared to be 'in the mind' in one and the same sense?

The same manœuvre has been made use of by the ingenious Irish philosopher in stifling many an

1. *Ibid* s. 67.

honest doubt of his interlocutor in the *Dialogues* In fact, Berkeley's subtle passage from one sense of the phrase 'in the mind' as meaning simply 'as perceived by the mind', to the other absolutely different sense of 'literally in the mind' is most clever and interesting to observe. This may best be noted in the following extract–a sample from many such–occuring in the *Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous.*

Hylas. Is it not certain I *see* things at a distance? do we not perceive the stars and moon, for example, to be a great way off? Is not this, I say, manifest to the senses?

Phil. Do you not in a dream too perceive those or the like objects? *Hylas.* I do.

Phil. And have they not then the same appearance of being distant? *Hylas.* They have.

Phil. But you do not thence conclude the apparitions in a dream to be without the mind? *Hylas.* By no means.

Phil. You ought not therefore to conclude that sensible objects are without the mind, from their appearance or manner wherein they are perceived.

Hylas. I acknowledge it. But doth not my sense deceive me in those cases?

Phil. By no means. The idea or thing which you immediately perceive, neither sense nor reason informs you that it actually exists without the mind. By sense you

only know that you are affected with such certain sensations of colour etc. And these you will not say are without the mind.

It is true that the sense does not inform us that a thing is 'without the mind', provided we understand by this phrase the meaning 'unperceived by the mind.' How can a sensation of a thing which we are actually perceiving give us by itself an information concerning the existence of that thing when it is not being perceived? But it is not true that the sense is incapable of informing us concerning the existence of a thing that, when being perceived, is *literally* without the mind. Every moment in our waking life we receive innumerable sensations of colours and sounds; we also receive at times the sensations of hunger, thirst, pain and the likewise. Now, here, are we not invariably conscious each time we receive the sensations that while those of the former sort have a source external to ourselves, the latter have one that is not so? Does Berkeley really mean that so far as mere sense is concerned an internal organic sensation is on the same footing in this respect as an external one of light, colour, sound etc? But the real fact is that he is here only playing upon the ambiguity of the words 'in the mind' and 'without the mind', and is unwarrantedly making use of an admission, that

was made with one sense in view, in quite a different sense.[1]

Sufficient evidence has been adduced by this time to prove that Berkeley's philosophy contains in reality two discordant elements, one advocating

1. It is needless to point out any more passages of this sort from Berkeley's treatises, when the reader can himself search them out after a careful perusal of the Berkeleyan treatises. Suffice it to add here that Berkeley like Locke often conceals his fallacies and inconsistencies, as a clever critic remarks, under the garb of a cunning use of ambiguous phraseology. We have already seen this in respect of the two very important phrases in his philosophy 'in the mind' and 'without the mind'. Another important term used ambiguously is 'idea', which is sometimes made to stand for an 'objective presentation', while at others for a 'subjective sensation'. Joad has systematically pointed out the fallacy of 'ambiguous middle' generally committed by the idealists.

All things are ideas.
All ideas exist only in the mind.
All things exist only in the mind.
(*Introduction to Modern Philosophy*, chap I.)

While the word 'idea' is used in the minor premise in the sense of an objective presentation, in the major premise the same term stands for a 'subjective modification.' If one were to stick honestly to any *one* of these two interpretations, few would consent to both these premises.

subjective and the other objective idealism. It is this fact that has led some critics to conclude that he can be described properly neither as a subjective nor as an objective idealist, but rather as an incongruent mixture of the two. What he denies piously in one passage he affirms in another, and what he criticises adversely on one page he himself propounds under a garbed terminology in another. While we find him stating in one treatise that if there were no sense there would be no knowledge at all, in another we are surprised to observe the same philosopher remarking that 'strictly the sense knows nothing'; and while in one place we find him proclaiming with all the force at his command that his principles 'do not argue against the existence of any one thing that we can comprehend either by sense or reflection,' at another place he is himself found employed in reducing all our waking experience with all its seriousness to the flimsy level of a mere dream experience. The same Berkeley, to quote one more instance, who in the earlier parts of his treatises, reduces to dust the Lockian theory of Representative Perception,—the copy theory of ideas as it is often called,—this same clever author is in the sequel himself found propounding with the same pen another copy theory of ideas which is little better than the one criticised before.[1] The reader, therefore, naturally begins at

1. "I have no objections" writes Berkeley in one of his letters to Johnson, "against calling the Ideas in the mind of God archetypes of ours." For a critical examination of this view, see *supra* Bk I, Chap II, pp. 51–52.

this stage to be rather despondent, and is inclined, in the face of these glaring inconsistencies, to declare as mistaken both who claim Berkeley as an objective idealist as well as those who interpret his philosophy in terms of subjective idealism. But shall this be our final conclusion? Shall we also be despondent and deliver our final verdict that it is equally a mistake to call Berkeley an objective idealist as it is to call him a subjective one?

Our final conclusion.

Let us admit at the very start that the above view is not totally wrong. There is no doubt that it contains much truth. It must be admitted that Berkeley's philosophy is not a consistent development of some *one* system of thought; and certain passages in it do unambiguously contradict what is contained elsewhere in other passages. But we question whether the two systems that we find present in it can, after all, prosecute their claims with *equa* right in holding Berkeley as their exponent. Our view, in other words, is that notwithstanding the presence of the two conflicting lines of thought in the philosophy of Berkeley, we may yet find it possible to give our verdict in favour of some one system, condemning the other as a foreign element

that was erroneously and with obvious inconsistency allowed an entrance into it. To put the matter in still simpler language, we hope to establish that the two lines of thought, to wit, subjective and objective idealism, are not two *equal halves* of the Berkeleyan principles, but that on a comprehensive view of his philosophy one shall be found to reign supreme and the other to be its subordinate.

Now, if we will carefully peruse the philosophical writings of Bishop George Berkeley, reading between the lines in one place and comparing different passages in another, carefully attending to the antecedents as well as the consequents of his philosophical development, and not neglecting, above all, his treatise '*Siris*' the experienced product of his old age meditations, we shall soon find that, after all, the central purpose of the wonderful doctrines propounded by him was surely a spread of objective and not subjective idealism. Nay, we shall even find that a truly subjective idealism would have in fact vitiated the main purpose that Berkeley had in view when advocating his philosophy. One of the chief aims of Bishop Berkeley was to bring men much nearer to God than what they were at the beginning of his philosophical career. He was disgusted with the prevalent materialism of his time, when people–philosophers and laymen alike–were engaged

in investigating only the secondary and material causes of the happenings in this universe with a consequent disregard towards the Ultimate Cause, the creater, the maintainer and the destroyer of us all. He wanted them to get rid of these secondary causes, this *tertium quid* of inert senseless matter, and himself desired to teach men to move directly in God and live and have their very being in Him. Now, in these circumstances it is quite obvious that for Berkeley to propound subjective idealism in all earnestness would have merely meant substituting another secondary cause in place of the one usually believed in by the people. Berkeley cannot certainly be expected to have been ignorant of the apparent fact that any one who informs his reader that every object of the latter's experience is in reality *nothing but* an idea in *his own* mind, so far removes him away from his attention towards God. To place the causality of all sense-experienee exclusively in the individual selves is so far to detract from the divine causality. It is, therefore, clear that Berkeley's aim would have been attained, if at all it was possible, by objective and not subjective idealism. Having proved so strenuously the total impossibility and non-existence of any inert material substance, and having established in consequence that an object of sense-perception is but an idea, the proper sequel, if Berkeley really wanted to turn his readers to the Divine Spirit and not to egoist solipsism or scepticism, would have been

to prove not that these ideas to which the things had already been reduced are subjective modifications private to each individual percipient and existing nowhere but *in his own mind*, but that they are only non-material objective presentations ultimately caused and maintained by God Himself. In fine, keeping in view the aim that he placed before himself, we can easily give our verdict when deciding upon the interpretation of the philosophy of Berkeley in favour of the objective idealism.

Subjective idealism, we thus find, is inconsistent with the important hypothesis of divine causality to establish which was one of Berkeley's chief aims. If the existence of a thing is really comprised within its perception by a finite spirit, as a true subjective idealist must admit it to be, there remains no room for divine causality. If, on the other hand, one insists on admitting the divine causality of the ideas of our sense-experience, as Berkeley undoubtedly wanted to do, it follows at once that for him the existence of an idea of sense-experienee is not totally comprised in its preception by each individual percipient —i. e. in technical words, that the *esse* of an idea is not its *percipi* alone, or to put it in a nutshell, that subjective idealism is impossible. Therefore, even if we admit the plausible statement that Berkeley advocated both divine causality as well as subjective idealism, we shall nevertheless

conclude that when deciding the question of the proper interpretation of his philosophy, we should rely upon the former (taken in conjunction with those portions of his treatises in which he unambiguously advocates the doctrine of objective idealism[1]), as the true expression of his mind, and not upon the latter which we shall rather regard as an exotic growth, a result of confusion, hesitation and unwarranted fear.

We have so far only considered how the doctrine of divine causality which was one of the chief aims of Berkeley points clearly in favour of the interpretation of his philosophy in terms of objective and not subjective idealism. But the reader will find for himself many other important points besides this in the Berkeleyan philosophy, which point clearly in favour of this very conclusion. One such is the Berkeleyan assumption of the existence of other finite spirits besides one's own petty self. Clearly, subjective idealism cannot be consistent with

1. Besides the passages quoted above, observe the following important remark: "When I shut my eyes, the things I saw may still exist, but it must be in another mind"—*Principles* s. 90 Note carefully the words, '*the thing I saw.*' Does not the above remark clearly admit that others may perceive even in my absence the *same* things that I perceived before—*exactly same* and not merely *similar*?

the admission of the existence of other beings like us. And we may be pretty sure that Berkeley would never have decided to differ so much from the popular beliefs as to deny the very existence of other living beings. Besides, he does not stop with the mere admission of the existence of other finite spirits, but takes the further step of assuming on every page and in every line the possibility and the fact of intercommunication between the different living beings; which, as any one can easily perceive, is absolutely inconsistent with any teaching of subjective idealism. The doctrine of objective idealism is thus found to be the vital breath of the Berkeleyan philosophy.

Having advanced sufficient 'positive' evidence in support of our interpretation, let us now turn to the consideration of those passages that appeared to lend support to the opposite view. Are they really inevitable and indispensable portions of the Berkeleyan philosophy? Was it absolutely essential for the great Irish advocate of Spiritual Realism to insert those passages in order to attain his cherished purpose of waging an uncompromising war against the conception of inert senseless matter? Or could he have avoided these unfortunate expressions and saved his philosophy both from a lot of misrepresentation as well as inconsistency?

Now, if we will look carefully into the whole matter, we shall find that these passages are after all the result not of a necessary development of the main theme of Berkeley, but only of a needless hesitation and unwarranted fear. Berkeley's central doctrine round which his entire philosophy throughout turns is, as is wellknown, the reality of the spirit and the total unreality of matter. He was determined to leave no stone unturned to prove matter totally non-existing, and avoided at once any position which, in his opinion, was likely to offer even the slightest ground to that conception. This will fairly explain the strange answer that he gave to the question of the identity of an object subjected to different perceptions. The doctrine that a thing remains the same even when perceived by different persons or at different times, implies obviously that *some* universal element exists in each sense-perception that has an objective reality and is independent of its perception on the part of each finite percipient. Now, Berkeley erroneously inferred that to admit such a universal objective element is tantamount to admitting a *material* element in each sense perception, which is generally believed to be the same in different perceptions. Of course, it is a fact that all such material element would possess the attributes of universality and objective reality. But the converse is not therefore necessarily true; and it is not necessary that all universal and objective element in our sense

experience must be 'material'. Here precisely lay Berkeley's mistake. He overlooked the fact that to admit a universal and objective element in our sense-perception does not necessarily mean admitting a 'material' element which he so bitterly opposed. Such an objective element can still be 'ideational' in nature and not 'material.' An object can still on this view be declared to be in nature but an 'idea' —of course, meaning by 'idea' not a subjective modification but an objective presentation created and maintained by the Divine activity. It was therefore only an unjustifiable fear, an unwarranted hesitation, an unworthy confusion that induced the great philosopher to declare in a momentary fit that philosophically speaking things are not *same* but only similar. Berkeley could easily have given an affirmative answer, in this place too, as he has actually done elsewhere, to the important query as to whether a thing can continue to be the *same* in different perceptions.

A similar remark will apply to the other passage in which Berkeley concludes that an object and the sensation are the same, because they are inseparable. That two things are inseparable does not necessarily mean that they are the same. Unless the word 'sensation' is here used in a sense that is quite different from the one usually attributed to it, the sentence is an instance of a clear

fallacy which is unworthy of a great philosopher. Sensation, as understood in the usual sense, can never be the same as the object sensed; and an admission that the sensation which is private to each one is different from the 'object' sensed, would in no way have harmed the central position of Berkeley himself. Here too the Berkeleyan outburst is only a result of an unwarranted momentary confusion, and should not be stressed too much by those who desire to arrive at the central doctrine that his philosophy is, on the whole, found to advocate.

We conclude, therefore, that Berkeley, on a comprehensive view of his philosophical writings, should be regarded rather as an objective idealist and not a subjective one. He does not reduce things to *mere ideas* in the mind of each individual percipient, but rather to *ideas as caused by the Infinite Spirit.* Further, by 'ideas' he does not mean private sensations but objective presentations which bear a subject-object-relation to each percipient spirit. From all which, it follows clearly, that those who declare Berkeley a subjective idealist are not quite on a safe ground.[1] It is true that

1. It is indeed gratifying to note that notwithstanding the great majority of writers who hold the contrary opinion regarding the Idealism of Berkeley, there are at least some who agree with the present writer in maintaining that

there are in the Berkeleyan treatises certain passages which do obviously seem to lend support to their view. But these passages, as has been sufficiently proved above, are not only not essential to the consistent and unhampered development of Berkeley's speculation but are besides positively inconsistent with it. They should therefore be regarded as of an exotic and foreign growth and not as expressing the main doctrine of the sublime idealistic philosophy propounded by the Irish speculator. Our final conclusion, therefore, remains that Berkeley is on the whole an objective and not a subjective idealist.[1]

Berkeley's philosophy is on the whole an exposition not of the subjective but of the objective idealism. "One more point requires to be emphasized," writes Alfred Hoernle in this connection, "in the face of traditional misunderstandings. An "idea" for Berkeley is an *object* of the perceiving mind: it is not a *state* or *process* of that mind. It is, therefore, not true that Berkeley's theory is "subjective idealism", at least if by that term is meant the theory that each mind perceives nothing but its own mental states. True, Berkeley's language is occasionally careless.... But when he actually faces the question whether ideas are states of mind, his answer is emphatically in the negative." —*Idealism as a Philosophical Doctrine*, p. 80.

1. It is interesting to note that the words used by Prof Radhakrishnan in connection with the idealistic doctrine of the *Yogachara*—also known as the *Vidnyanavadin*— Bauddha philosophers apply equally to the doctrine

of the Irish Idealist. "While we are willing to admit" observes the learned critic, "that it was not the intention of the yogacar school to make the world of space and t me dependent or contingent on individual consciousness, yet we cannot help saying that, in their eagerness to refute naive realism, they confused psychological and metaphysical points and countenanced a crude mentalism. The confusion is increased by the employment of the same term, vijnana, to indicate both the changing and the unchanging aspects of mental life. We have the skandhavijnana, which is a phenomenal effect of Karma, and the alayavijnana, which is the ever active, continuous, spiritual energy dwelling in all. The reality of the world depends on the latter....Unfortunately, we notice the tendency to identify the alayavijnana with skandhavijnana, which is only a property of the finite mind. If foundational knowledge is confused with the activities of particular subjects in space and time, we are upon the slope which leads to the precipice of scepticism." (*Indian Philosophy* Vol. I, pp. 631-32). It was in fact the same confusion between subjective and objective idealism that we have found in the writings of Berkeley. It is no wonder, therefore, if a similar fate overtook the two philosophies. Critics seldom represent the Berkeleyan philosophy in its true colours — as being in the main an exposition of the Doctrine of objective idealism; while, as for the other school, "Almost all of the non-Buddhist critics of the Yogacara theory" to quote the same learned author again, "overlook the element of truth contained in it (albeit overlaid with a mass of error) and repudiate it as mere mentalism."

CHAPTER II.

TIME, SPACE, AND CAUSALITY.

"One of my earliest inquiries," writes Berkeley in one of his Whitehall letters to Johnson, "was about Time, which led me into several paradoxes that I did not think fit or necessary to publish." Indeed the problems about the nature of Time and Space are so subtle and perplexing among the speculative discussions of metaphysicians, that it is no wonder that even such a subtle reasoner as young Berkeley should have been led into committing 'several paradoxes' while deliberating upon them. In fact, even the great St. Augustine is reported to have replied to a question regarding the nature of Time, '*Si non rogas intelligo*' meaning 'The more I set myself to think of it, the less I understand it.'[1] Inspite of the vast amount of labour and energy spent in tackling these problems since the very beginning of speculative thought, they remain to this day moot questions of metaphysical speculation and philosophers can by no means be said to have arrived at a satisfactory agreement regarding the nature of these two most essential conditions of all our experience. Every moment of our life is in time and space. Time and tide, they say, wait for none. Time is

1. See, Locke's *Essay*, II, xiv, 2.

continually passing and a moment gone is lost for ever. Is it, after all, some actually existing entity, or is it a mere 'form of perception' super-added by our finite intelligences, as Kant would have it?

Berkeley's views on the nature of Time and Space are fairly in accordance with the rest of his philosophy. The *esse* of a spirit consists in having ideas; and it is this very succession of ideas in the mind of any finite spirit that constitutes what is generally known as Time. Berkeley could not, with his famous attack on the doctrine of abstraction, naturally accept any general idea of Time in general abstracted from the succession of particular ideas in the finite spirits. It will be certainly very interesting to compare at this place this view of Berkeley with that of his immediate predecessor on this same important metaphysical problem.

Locke's definition of Time stands thus: "This consideration of duration, as set out by certain periods, and marked by certain measures or epochs, is that, I think, which most properly we call *time*."[1] Time is, in other words, nothing else than 'measured duration'. As for those portions of duration which are not in this fashion measured, we do not denote them by the word 'time', but rather

Locke's definition of Time

1. *Essay*, II, , xiv 17.

employ such phrases in connection with them as 'before all time' or 'when time shall be no more' and so on. But what is this measure of duration that marks what we call 'time'? It is, according to Locke, nothing else than the succession of ideas in our minds, 'caused in us either by the natural appearances of those ideas coming constantly of themselves into our waking thoughts, or else caused by external objects successively affecting our senses'. He thus sums up his view of '*time* in general': "By considering any part of infinite duration, as set out by periodical measures, we come by the idea of what we call *time* in general."

Time according to Berkeley.

Now, the most outstanding difference between this view of time and that advocated by Berkeley is that while Locke takes the succession of ideas as the *measure* of time, Berkeley takes it to *constitute* time itself. He can not countenance any idea of time *in general* apart from the succession of particular ideas in a finite spirit. "For my own part", observes our author in the *Principles*, "Whenever I attempt to frame a simple idea of Time, abstracted from the succession of ideas in my mind, which flows uniformly and is participated by all beings, I am lost and embrangled in inextricable difficulties... ..... *Time* therfore being *nothing, abstracted from the succession of ideas in our minds*, it follows

that the duration of any finite spirit must be estimated by the number of ideas or actions succeeding each other in that same spirit or mind."[1] Berkeley has himself expressed clearly the difference between this view of his and that of Locke's. "A succession of ideas", he writes in the Whitehall letter, "I take to constitute time, and not to be only the *sensible measure* there of, as Mr. Locke and others think".

Can Time be private to each individual?

Such a conception of time, however, contradicts rudely the plainest notions of the commonsense man, and is open to attacks from even the philosopher in more respects than one. If, as Berkeley maintains, 'the duration of any finite spirit must be estimated by the number of ideas or actions succeeding each other in that same spirit or mind,' it will follow that a short-lived son who dies a premature death may have really lived for a longer duration than his unfortunate father who survives him if the latter has had fewer ideas in his lifetime than his clever son. An hour of sorrow or of intense attention on any one idea will have to be declared, on these principles, as being *really shorter* than one of pleasant conversation in which ideas may naturally be expected to succeed one another at a rate quicker than the one in any of the former

1 *Principles* s. 98.

hours. In fact, the natural conclusion from such a definition of time seems to be that *each individual percipient will have his own private time*, and that in the absence of a common standard of time, any inter-communication between the several finite spirits will be rendered impossible.

But there is, besides this, another interesting objection to the above Berkeleyan conception of Time. Time, he says, is *constituted* and not only *measured* by the *succession* of ideas in a finite spirit. But what precisely does this phrase 'succession of ideas' mean? What is really meant when it is said that ideas *succeed* one another? An idea B succeeds another idea A—that is, the idea A comes *before* the idea B, or, what is the same thing, that the idea B comes after the idea A. But what do these words *before* and *after* connote, apart from any *previous supposition* of some conception of Time? The words 'succeed' and 'preceed' indicate nothing else than 'occur after' and 'occur before'—after, i. e., 'after *in time*', and so also 'before' i. e., 'before *in time*'. The phrase 'succession of ideas' is thus meaningless apart from and itself presupposes as an essential condition some idea of Time in general in which ideas may be said to succeed one another.

Common standard of Time essential for social inter-communication.

It is indeed a very curious thing that a philosopher who is himself found to advocate views which directly run counter to the most cherished beliefs of the ordinary humanity, should yet complain of the perplexities of the notions of other speculators and, what is more, should attempt to pose himself on the side of the commonsense man as against the speculative philosopher. "Time, place, and motion, taken in particular or concrete, are what everybody knows; but, having passed through the hands of a metaphysician, they become too abstract and fine to be apprehended by men of ordinary sense. Bid your servant meet you at such a time in such a place, and he shall never stay to deliberate on the meaning of those words; in conceiving that particular time and place, or the motion by which he is to get thither, he finds not the least difficulty."[1] But here the author of the *Principles of Human knowledge* ought certainly to have observed that *if* the servant has in truth no other idea of time beyond the particular succession of ideas in *his own* mind, and the master no other idea beyond the succession of ideas in *his own* mind, the servant can never be able to comply with the order of his master. Berkeley reduces Time to a

1. *Principles*, s, 97.

mere subjective feeling that is private to each one. I have no idea of Time, he maintains clearly, beyond the succession of ideas in '*my mind*'; and as for any objective universal Time that can be 'participated by all beings', he is 'lost and embrangled in inextricable difficulties' when he thinks of it. But any such reduction of Time to a mere subjective feeling private to each individual will really close all avenues of any inter-communication between the several finite spirits. Besides, Berkeley himself admits that the ideas in the mind of one man are often found to succeed one another with a greater rapidity than those in the mind of another. But how can he know this, and how can he even describe the ideas in the mind of any man as 'swift' or 'slow' unless he assumes some *common* standard of time ?[1]

1 In some places, Berkeley is at last compelled to admit in plain words the necessity of such a *common* standard which, however he argues, is supplied by God. Thus do we find that on almost every occassion, Berkeley pursues the metaphysical discussions in his own one-sided manner, to a certain extent, and when difficulties begin to present themselves as a natural consequence of his one-sided conceptions, he suddenly introduces theology into metaphysics thus confusing philosophical arguments based on reason with theological beliefs based on faith. In fact, he is often found to reinstate under the garb of a theologian

As Berkeley refuses to admit any idea of Time apart from the succession of particular ideas in a man's mind, so he refuses to admit any idea of Space apart from the particular sensations of distance felt by each individual percipient. Time and Space are, for Berkeley, essentially relative. "As to Space" he writes in the above-quoted letter to Johnson, "I have no notion of any but that which is relative. .....Sir Isaac Newton supposeth an absolute Space distinct from relative, and consequent thereto, absolute motion distinct from relative motion. And with all other mathematicians he supposeth the infinite divisibility of the finite parts of this absolute Space: he also supposeth material bodies to drift therein..... I cannot agree with him in these particulars. I make no scruple to use the word space as well as all other words in common use; but I do not mean thereby a distinct absolute being". He quotes with appreciation, in *Siris*, the opinion of the *Pythagoreans* and the *Platonists*, (whose doctrine He dubs as 'the true System of the World'), that there is 'no such thing as real absolute space'.[1]

Berkeley's views on Space.

what he explodes under that of a metaphysician. We have already observed this in connection with his attack on the concept of Material Substance as well as on the Representative Theory of Perception.

1. *Siris*, s. 266.

He repudiates Locke's distinction between 'pure space' and 'place'[1] as well as the Newtonian distinction between absolute and relative space. He maintains that he has neither any idea nor any notion of any pure or absolute Space, apart from his particular ideas of relative space. People believe erroneously that they have an idea of absolute Space; as a matter of fact, all their ideas of Space are relative to their own bodies.[2] Moreover, curiously enough, he was afraid that the admission of an infinite eternal Space would really be tantamount to a setting up of another infinite dead being in opposition to God, or else, in case the two are identified, to an admission that God is extended.

As in the case of relative time, however, all such particular ideas of Space being relative to the body of each individual person, must also be private to each percipient mind. Relative Space will mean, as much as relative Time, an absence of all social inter-communication between the several finite spirits. Berkeley certainly admits the plurality of spirits; and if he is also to accept the natural contention that these several fellow-spirits are found to have social inter-communication, he must certainly admit the existence of some idea of a common

1. Vide, *Essay*, Bk. II, chap. XIII.

2. *De Motu*, s. 55.

standard of Time and Space wherein 'all beings may participate.'[1]

Berkeley maintained strongly that Space is an object not of sight but of touch alone. We ordinarily believe that we *see* a thing to be at some distance from us. What happens in reality, according to Berkeley, is, however, only that the distance is *suggested* and not actually *seen*. It is really the tactual sensations alone that can directly convey to the mind the ideas of Space and distance. "From what we have shewn" observes Berkeley in his *Essay on the New Theory of Vision*, "it is a manifest consequence that the ideas of Space, Outness, and things placed at a distance are not, strictly speaking, the objects of sight."[2] And again, "From all which it follows, that the judgment we make of the distance of an object viewed with both eyes is entirely the result of experience."[3] It cannot, however, be said that Berkeley was quite correct in thus denying that distance can ever be the object of sight; and he may be said to have confused

Space, an object of touch alone.

1. Berkeley again introduces in this connection the concept of God and admits the existence of an absolute common Space which he had formerly denied. The same device is followed in the case of Motion also.

2. *New Theory of Vision*, s. 46.

3. *Ibid* s. 20.

the perception of *depth* with that of *length* and *breadth*. It might be that in the former case the distance is 'a line directed endwise to the eye,' only one point being projected in the fund of the eye, which remains the same whether the distance is shorter or longer. [1] But is this necessarily true of the perception of 'superficial extension' too? Can we not perceive directly even the *length* and *breadth* of the space without us, by the sight? [2]

The phenomenal nature of Space and Time.

There is one very significant sentence contained in the above-quoted letter of Berkeley to Johnson, that reminds one of the famous distinction between the noumena and phenomena as maintained afterwards by Kant. "I suppose" he observes therein, "that all things past and to come,

1. See, *ibid* s. 2.

2. Cf. James on this point: "I cannot get over the fact that distance, when I see it, is a genuinely *optical feeling*, even though I be at a loss to assign any one physiological process in the organ of vision to the varying degrees of which the variations of feeling uniformly correspond. It is awakened by all the optical signs which Berkeley mentioned, and more besides;.... When awakened, however, it seems optical and not heterogeneous with the other two dimensions of the visual field.... *The measurement of distance is, as Berkeley truly said, a result of suggestion and experience. But visual experience alone is adequate to produce it, and this he erroneously denied.*"—*Psychology*, pp 346-48

are present to the mind of God, and that in Him there is no change, variation, or succession of time." Berkeley maintains, in short, that the phenomenal series of Time and Space are true only so far as the experience of the finite percipients is concerned. The objects, as perceived by the finite percipients, appear no doubt under the limits of Time and Space; but that they should so appear even to God himself, who perceives the objects as they really are, is not necessary. Now it is this same fact that is expressed by Kant when he maintains, in his own peculiar terminology, that time and space are real only so far as the *phenomena* are concerned, but not when applied to the *noumena* or the things as they really are.[1]

Berkeley and Kant

There is, however, one very important point of divergence between the views of Kant and Berkeley regarding this particular question. It is true that both believed in the phenomenal character of Space and Time; but, while Kant admitted on the one hand

1. Berkeley can certainly expect to receive adequate support from modern metaphysicians in his view that Time and Space are only phenomenal and not ultimately real. "An absolute experience" observes Prof. Taylor, "must be out of time and out of space, in the sense that its contents are not apprehended in the form of the spatial and temporal series, but in some other way. Space and Time, then, must be the phenomenal appearance of a

that the Time and Space series are not valid so far as the noumena are concerned, he maintained on the other hand in plain words that so far as the finite spirits and their phenomenal experiences are concerned, Time and Space are universal 'forms of intuition' that are common to and can be participated in by all the finite beings, and not mere individual feelings, private to each percipient as Berkeley would have them to be. If Kant calls his Time and Space intuitions 'subjective', his meaning of this word is quite different from the one borne by the same word in connection with Berkeley's philosophy. It would mean only, 'super-added by the finite intelligences, as not given in the original nature of the things in themselves'; but would not therefore connote the Berkeleyan sense of 'private to each individual percipient'.

We may conclude our present discussion of the nature of Time and Space as contained in the philosophy of Berkeley by observing that the real error lying at the bottom of his confusion on this point consists in his failure to take into consideration the nature of Space and Time as forms of ***conception***, while he has throughout dealt with them only as forms of ***perception***. There is a very important difference between Time and Space as results of intellectual conception and the same as results of immediate perception; and while Berkeley's account of these two tallies with the modern account of perceptual Time and Space, nowhere does he appear to refer to these as forms of conception. Time and Space, as perceived immediately by us, are no doubt relative to our ideas and consequently private to each one of us. But, for purposes of scientific investigation as well as practical social inter-communication, we ***construct*** out of these particular perceptual cognitions of Time and Space, a general universal standard of Time and Space which applies to and can well be participated in by all the innumerable living beings. And this latter fact Berkeley erroneously denied.[1]

Berkeley overlooks *conceptual* Time and Space.

higher reality which is spaceless and timeless." —***Elements of Metaphysics***, p. 255.

1. For an admirable account of the two kinds of Space and Time, and their distinguishing features, see Taylor's *Elements of Metaphysics*, Book III, chap. IV, pp. 242-253. While Berkeley considered Time and Space only in their *perceptual* aspects neglecting totally their natures as *forms of conception*, Kant may be said to have done just the reverse of this, and to have advanced in consequence, an equally one-sided account of Time and Space in his Critical Philosophy. When he declared that Time and Space being 'pure intuitions' are independent of and in fact presupposed by all our practical experience, he overlooked the most important fact that our ideas of perceptual Time and Space are very intimately connected with our immediate experience and that much of his description of Time and

We have already dwelt upon Berkeley's views regarding causality, in some details, in our previous discussions.[1] We shall therefore add here only some passing remarks upon this topic before we close this chapter.

Berkeley's views on Causality.

With Berkeley, the rule that every event must have a cause is a fundamental axiom of all reasoning. To him, as to Locke, it is 'repugnant to reason' to ever imagine that any one thing in nature can ever come into existence without a cause to account for it. He constantly makes use of this important principle throughout his speculations; and his proofs of the existence of God and of the other finite spirits, all depend, as we have already seen, upon this fundamental assumption.

This causality, however, in which he so strongly believed, resides in the real sense, according to him, only in the spirits and no where else; since, so far as the ideas are concerned, they being perfectly inactive and devoid

Ideas as signs.

Space applies to these only as the mathematical concepts formed by intellectual construction — later products of human reason.

1. See, for example, *supra* pp. 49, 62, 153, 155, 205, 215 ff, 227 etc. etc.

of any power whatsoever, cannot really cause any thing. It is true, that in the ordinary speech one idea is generally declared to be the 'cause' of another idea; but the real fact in all such cases, according to the great Spiritualist, is that the idea alleged to be the 'cause' is only a *sign*, and no more, of the second idea that is perceived to follow it. All *material* causes are thus reduced by Berkeley to mere signs. "The connexion of ideas" he declares unreservedly, "does not imply the relation of *cause* and *effect*, but only of a *mark* or *sign* with the *thing signified*. The fire which I see is not the *cause* of the pain I suffer upon my approaching it, but the *mark* that forewarns me of it. In like manner the noise that I hear is not the *effect* of this or that motion or collision of the ambient bodies, but the *sign* thereof."[1]

Now, this is virtually to deny all *necessary connection* between our ideas, and to admit only a *uniform succession*. Berkeley thus admits, to state the same fact in other words, only a sequence among our ideas but not 'consequence'.[2] His repudiation of any supposed necessary connection

No necessary connection among the ideas.

1. *Principles* s 65.

2. The Berkeleyan conception of causality rests, so far as the ideas are concerned, in fact on two chief

amongst our ideas is plain and unambiguous. "That food nourishes, sleep refreshes and fire warms us; that to sow in the seed time is the way to reap in the harvest; and in general that to obtain such ends, such or such means are conducive—all this we know, not by discovering any ***necessary connexion*** between our ideas, but only by the *observation* of the settled laws of nature, without which we should be all in uncertainty and confusion."[1]

From the fact, however, that Berkeley denies all necessary connection in the ideas perceived by

assumptions: (1) The contention that all ideas are completely inert and so powerless to cause any thing; and that (ii) the idea generally designated as the cause is in reality an entity completely distinct from and unrelated to that which is declared to be its 'effect.' Now, as for the first of these two assumptions we have already offered some remarks in a previous chapter (see p. 108); while as for the second, we may here observe that modern speculation now refuses to rest in the unscientific belief that the effect is really distinct from the cause; and maintains, on the contrary, that the cause *is* the effect, and that production does not mean the creation of an absolutely new and unrelated object but only a *manifestation* of what was already present in a latent form in the cause. This same doctrine of the presence of the effect in the cause is known in Indian philosophy by the name of *Satkaryavada*.

1. *Principles*, s. 31.

us, we ought not to rush to the conclusion that he therefore denies also the ***uniformity*** in nature; on the contrary, he is quite emphatic on this point. The sequence among the ideas is maintained by and owes its origin to the divine Will. That the fire should warm us, and the water should quench our thirst,—all this is due to the arbitrary will of God. In itself, no idea has any necessary connection with any other idea; and yet, thanks to the divine benevolence and love, we often find ***regular*** sequences among our innumerable ideas. All heat is universally found to expand things and all cold to contract them; fire has throughout been observed to burn things and cold water to extinguish it. The source of all this uniformity in nature is to be found not in any inherent power among the ideas themselves but in the benevolent will of God. "His operations are regular and uniform"; and it is therefore observed by us that things are produced ***"in a constant regular way according to the laws of nature"***. Berkeley does not deny the fact that "there are certain general laws that run through the whole chain of natural effects", and admits likewise "the *uniformity* there is in the production of natural effects." His philosophy, therefore, neither denies the uniformity in nature, nor the fact that events are governed in this universe according to certain

Berkeley on the laws of nature.

fixed and settled rules known as the 'laws of nature'; only his definition of these 'laws of nature' is somewhat different from the one ordinarily accepted in science. While with the scientists it would include some conception of the necessary connection among the things themselves, to Berkeley the words 'laws of nature' indicate nothing else than the statements of the uniform sequences observed by us to exist in certain of our ideas and maintained directly by the benevolent will of the Infinite Spirit. Accordingly, we actually find him defining the *laws of* ***nature*** as "the set rules or established methods wherein the Mind we depend on excites in us the ideas of sense."

Locke, Berkeley, and Hume

There are two points of extreme importance in this Berkeleyan conception of causality and the laws of nature, which deserve special mention in view of the subsequent development of his philosophy in the scepticism of Hume. In the first place Berkeley maintained clearly that our knowledge of and belief in any individual law of nature is due solely to a constant and *uniform observation* on our part; and in the second place he declared that this sequence or succession universally observed to exist between any two particular ideas is due not to any necessary connection among the ideas themselves but only to the ***arbitrary*** will of God. It is true

that the arbitrariness in the divine will does not mean caprice, but after all, He can certainly change, if He wishes, the order of sequence generally observed to exist in any two ideas, as is actually seen to happen in the case of miracles. Now, all this was admitted before Berkeley by his illustrious predecessor John Locke. And therefore, when we later on find Hume insisting on ' custom ', ' arbitrariness ', ' absence of any necessary connection ' and such wise things in his celebrated account of the causal nexus, we are immediately reminded of the critical remark of Andrew Seth that "To an attentive reader of Locke and Berkeley, Hume's celebrated account of causality really contains nothing new."[1]

So much with regard to the inert ideas. As to the causality of spirits, on the contrary, Berkeley maintained it as strongly as he denied it in the case of ideas. Finite spirits, in as much as they are finite, possess only finite or limited causality. They can cause only some limited changes in the external ideas and their own bodies, while their power of causing mental images is considerably vast and extensive. Ultimate and infinite causality, however, rests in the last resort only in God himself, He who has created us, maintains us and can undoubtedly destroy us.

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1. *Scottish Philosophy*, p. 53.

CHAPTER III.

CONCLUSION.

With the concluding sentence of the last chapter our task has been practically accomplished. Our main purpose, as declared at the very outset, was to examine critically the idealistic doctrines of Bishop George Berkeley, and slowly yet steadily we have compassed in the previous pages practically the entire field of his metaphysical writings. We commenced our study in the opening chapter of our First Book with a critical account of the important pre-Berkeleyan modern philosophers from Descartes to Locke; while the next three chapters acquainted us with the views of the great Spiritual Realist regarding the important problems of the ultimate Nature of Reality, the true Source of Human Knowledge and the Lockian doctrine of Abstract Ideas, respectively. Having thus prepared the ground in the First Book, we passed on in the two succeeding books to our central task of examining the Irish Speculator's views regarding the two most fundamental elements in this universe—Matter and Spirit. It was thus in the Second Book that we devoted ourselves exclusively to a critical consideration of Berkeley's views on the problem of Matter, and refuted therein at great length the various ingenious and plausible arguments advanced by him in support of his immaterialistic hypothesis; while the Third Book found us engaged in a critical discussion of his account of the Spirits—the self, other finite spirits and God. With the conclusion of the Third Book we were really out of the thick of the controversy, and our last two chapters have served only to fill in the gaps left in our previous discussions. Thus while the first chapter of the Fourth Book found us engaged in a very interesting discussion about the exact nature of Berkeley's Idealism, the next chapter afforded us an opportunity to supplement our examination of Berkeley's philosophy with an account of his views regarding Time, Space and Causality. The reader will thus find that with the conclusion of the last chapter our task, as said above, has really been accomplished, and it only remains now to add a few finishing touches before we bring to a close this critical examination of one of the most important and famous systems of idealism ever propounded in the history of modern philosophy.

A rapid survey of the work done.

An interesting question of some importance is sometimes raised in connection with the philosophy of Berkeley which we will do well to consider here briefly. Was Berkeley, it is asked, a sceptic, and does his idealism finally lead us to

Did Berkeley advocate scepticism?

scepticism? Now, it must be mentioned at the very outset that the two questions as stated just above are really different from one another and must not therefore be unwittingly confused; for, it is possible that we might not find Berkeley himself to be a sceptic, and yet find his philosophy producing in the reader's mind that peculiar state of suspense, doubt and hesitation which is otherwise known as the sceptical mood. Apart from this distinction, however, both the questions really presuppose a third fundamental question as to the exact meaning and connotation of this word scepticism. What precisely are we to understand by this term—scepticism, and under what conditions are we to declare a man as being in the sceptical mood? Now, this word connotes, as is common with philosophical terms in general, more than one meaning and is used in at least three different senses.[1] According to the first sense, it means merely a state of suspense, hesitation and *reflection*, one in which the mind is unable to arrive at a definite conclusion regarding any particular problem; secondly, it may mean a state in which a person is induced to deny the reality and truth of things as they actually exist;[2] while, in the last place, it may also connote that attitude of mind in which a man denies all

1. See *Encyclopaedia Britannica*; and the *Vocabulary of Philosophy* by W. Fleming.

2. *Vide First Dialogue*, s, 5.

possibility of any knowledge whatsoever regarding the real state of things.[1]

Now, it will be apparent even on a cursory glance at his writings that Berkeley neither denies the possibility of knowing the real nature of things, nor shows any signs of hesitation or suspense regarding the truth of his conclusions. There remains therefore only the second meaning according to which, if at all, Berkeley may be declared a sceptic. And here we find that he denies, no doubt, in clear unmistakable terms the reality of any external material things, beyond the ideas which alone according to him are immediately perceived, and may therefore be rightly declared a sceptic by anyone who believes firmly in the real existence of such material objects; though he himself, of course, being firmly convinced of the total unreality of all such objects beyond the ideas, is ready to assert that he is a sceptic neither with regard to the nature of things nor with regard to their existence.[2]

1. There is also a fourth and a popular sense of the word sceptic, according to which it denotes a person who advocates theories contrary to the current, generally accepted notions. This sense and its possible application to Berkeley are, however, too apparent to need here any detailed consideration at our hands.

2. *Third Dialogue* s. 8; and *Principles* s. 40.

We have considered so far only our first question—whether Berkeley himself was a sceptic. If we are to judge his writings, however, from the effects they produce on the reader's mind, we may find it incumbent upon us to declare them sceptical even according to the first sense of the word. The following remarks of Hume on Berkeley's arguments are quite famous and may well be cited in this connection. "That all his (Berkeley's) arguments," observes the Scottish arch-sceptic, "though otherwise intended, are, in reality, merely sceptical, appears from this, that they admit of no answer, and produce no conviction. Their only effect is to cause that momentary amazement, and irresolution, and confusion, which is the result of scepticism."[1] It was in an exactly similar strain, that Hylas too was led on in the ***Second Dialogue*** to offer the following desparate reply to Philonous when confronted by the latter's impressive array of plausible and ingenious arguments. "To deal frankly with you, Philonous, your arguments seem in themselves unanswerable; but they have not so great an effect on me as to produce that entire conviction, that hearty acquiescence, which attends demonstration."[2] In deed, the reckless statements of Hylas in the first two sections of the *Third Dialogue* afford us an

1 *Essays*, note p. 368

2 *Second Dialogue*, s. 17.

extremely interesting--and at the same time pathetic —illustration of Kant's famous definition of scepticism as "a mental attitude in which reason treats itself with such violence that it could have never arisen save from complete despair of ever satisfying our most important aspirations."[1] In fact, every ordinary reader will find a similar effect produced upon his mind after a careful reading of Berkeley's idealistic arguments, and we may therefore observe in conclusion that we have really little to quarrel with Hume's above-quoted observations on the doctrines of his immediate predecessor, especially when he has taken care to add a most important qualification to them—"though otherwise intended."

Principal sources of Berkeley's errors

We have discussed critically in the previous pages the various arguments advanced by Berkeley in connection with the nature and existence of the two fundamental realities, Matter and Spirit, and have exposed in several places the fallacies contained therein. Have we discovered in this examination of his philosophy, any general sources of error that have been responsible for vitiating his otherwise sound conclusions? Now, we may fairly enumerate here four such chief kinds of errors, one or the other of which is often found

1. *Prolegomena to Metaphysics*, s. 4

to lurk in Berkeley's arguments wherever they are fallacious. To begin with, we must mention in this connection Berkeley's clever *use of ambiguous phraseology* which has certainly been very largely responsible for conferring on his ingenious arguments that plausibility and show of validity which so much confounds his ordinary readers.[1] Next comes his *employment of faulty analogies.* Analogy is indeed a very dangerous weapon in argumentation, for a clever use of a faulty analogy can easily lead an incautious disputant into admtting the validity of a plausible contention, which but for that analogy he would never admit. We have already brought to light the fallacies underlying Berkeley's alleged analogy between the waking and the dream life, and the one between God and the finite spirits.[2] The third most fruitful source of error in the philosophy of Berkeley is *the onesidedness of his concepts.* He is often found to proceed upon half-truths and one-sided concepts, refusing to consider the complete implication of a term, and soon landing in consequence, into difficulties and inconsistencies. Thus, for instance, it is no doubt true that every object of sense-perception *as perceived by me* contains a subjective element

1. Vide *supra* pp. 276-281.

2. For some more instances of the kind, *VidePrinciples* s. 41 and 136; *Fourth Dialogue* s. 10; and *supra* pp. 215 and 218 of this book.

(which remains private to each individual), as well as an objective one;[1] but Berkeley is not at times satisfied with a partial recognition of such a subjective element, and must needs contend that the *whole* of the object is subjective; while we have already shown in our last chapter how he similarly overlooks the conceptual aspect of Time and Space admitting only the *perceptual* one. Last, but by no means the least in importance, comes *his confusion between metaphysics and theology.*[2] As has been already pointed out in the previous pages, many of Berkeley's novel conclusions would have never appeared acceptable to the ordinary reader even at the first sight, had it not been for the fact that he often supplied as a theologian what he took away as a metaphysician, the result of all which being that his view often differed ultimately from the one he attacked only in terminology and not in any essential point of sense.[3]

An estimate of Berkeley's philosophy.

In spite of all these and many other fallacies, however, Berkeley's idealistic philosophy will, when rightly interpreted, be found to contain undoubtedly a considerable element of constructive truth, and we can not quite agree with those

1, *Vide supra* p. 126.

2. *Supra* pp. 107--08: and 300; (footnotes).

3. For one more extremely apt illustration of this, *Vide Third Dialogue*, s. 29-30.

critics who regard his philosophy as "simply a link in the chain of sceptical reasoning connecting Locke with Hume." Different estimates have been passed upon his philosophy by different critics, some eulogising it as an 'epoch-making' system, others condemning it as a mere destructive criticism that 'adds nothing to the philosophy.' Thus, for example, we find Thomas Green passing the following unsympathetic remarks on the philosophy of Berkeley: "It was one thing, however, to show the contradictions involved in Locke's doctrine of matter, another effectively to replace it. To the latter end Berkeley can not be said to have made any permanent contribution.....He adds nothing to the philosophy, which he makes consistent with itself, while by making it consistent he empties it of three parts of its suggestiveness. His doctrine, in short, is merely Locke purged, and Locke purged is no Locke."[1] Contrast with this such an estimate as the following one: "The consequences of the new conception of matter" observes Fraser, "presented by Berkeley justify us in regarding it as one of the conceptions that mark epochs, and become springs of spiritual progress." While the author of the ***Principles of Human Knowledge*** has propounded, in the opinion of such a critic as Fraser "a constructive spiritualism" by means of his philosophical writings, the same philosopher appears, to a

1. *Introduction to Hume*, s. 155.

writer like Schwegler, to have played the part of a mere "Perfecter of Subjective Idealism",[1] that began with Descartes, took a particular direction at the hands of Locke, and ended finally in the complete scepticism of Hume.[2] To us, however, it is clear that the central theme of Berkeley's philosophy, in spite of all his fallacies and inconsistencies, is certainly not a mere subjective idealism, and that neither can Berkeley be described adequately as merely 'Locke purged', nor Hume as merely 'Berkeley reduced to consistency.' It is true that at times his language is most ambiguous and lends itself to an interpretation in terms of a completely subjective idealism; and yet when we come across such a clear statement as the following, we can not believe that any reasonable critic will be inclined to style his philosophy any more as a mere subjective idealism. "The question between the Materialists and me" explains Berkeley, "is not whether things have a ***real*** existence out of the mind of this or that person, but, whether they have an ***absolute*** existence, distinct from being perceived by God, and exterior to all minds."[3] There are numerous

1. *History of Philosophy*, Seelye's translation, p. 294.

2. Cf. Seth: "It is a strange irony of fate that a philosophy whose chief aim was the refutation of scepticism should itself have come to be regarded as simply a link in the chain of sceptical reasoning connecting Locke with Hume."

3. *Third Dialogue* s. 9.

such passages in Berkeley's writings, and it is really these that lead us to observe, that it was in reality only an over-enthusiasm on the part of the great Spiritual Realist that made him maintain, that the objective universal element, which he after all admitted as being involved in every act of sense-perception, was nevertheless only 'spiritual' (or better ideational) and not 'material.' Our own estimate of that great Irish Speculator therefore remains the same as before, that "He was a spiritualist from first to last—an over-zealous spiritualist we might say, who in his excessive enthusiasm for the spiritual substance failed to observe that an admission of the material substance as the *immediate* cause of our ideas of external perception, besides being extremely essential and indispensable in the face of our actual sense-experience, need not really come by any means in the way of any one's true and earnest devotion towards the Almighty God, if supplemented by the faith that the *ultimate* creator and maintainer of all—not excluding the material substance itself—is none else but God or the Infinite Being himself."[1]

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1. *Supra*, Book II, chapter I, page 128.

APPENDIX A.

(BEING AN APPENDIX TO BOOK I CHAP. 4.)

Dr. Johnston and the Berkeleyan criticism of Locke's doctrine of abstraction.

We have established in the fourth chapter of our first book that Berkeley's famous attack on the Lockian doctrine of abstract ideas is a glaring instance of the fallacy of *Ignoratio Elenchi*. Dr. Johnston, however, maintains in his excellent book '*Development of Berkeley's Philosophy*,' that Berkeley's criticism of Locke is a sound one and that the charge of *Ignoratio Elenchi* cannot be urged against it. It is certainly neither out of place nor devoid of interest for us to examine in this appendix the merits of the arguments on which Dr. Johnston bases his counteropinion; and we shall attempt to offer here a few points of criticism in refutation of his arguments.

Dr. Johnston lays great stress upon the alleged fact that Berkeley does not refer, in sections six to ten of the *Introduction to the Principles*, to Locke's theory of abstraction but only to the 'generally received theory' regarding the formation of abstract ideas. His contention is that Berkeley's criticism of abstract ideas in the above *Introduction* consists in reality of two parts, viz., (i) the examination of the generally accepted theory of abstraction in which Locke is not specially referred to- sections 6 to 10; and (ii) the examination of the particular arguments advanced by Locke in support of the above doctrine,—

section 11 onwards. "It has been too rashly assumed" complains Dr. Johnston, "that the view which Berkeley states is intended to represent Locke's theory. The paragraphs (Introduction to the Principles, 7—9) in which Berkeley expounds the theory of the formation of abstract ideas which he wishes to criticise are introduced by the statement "It is agreed on all hands", and Locke is never referred to. It is only later, when Berkeley is examining "what can be alleged in defence" of the theory, that he mentions Locke."[1] And again, "The general theory which Berkeley states is neither a travesty nor a faithful reproduction of Locke's theory, because it pretends to be neither."[2]

Now, a careful reader of the *Essay on Human Understanding* as well as the *Introduction to the Principles of Human Knowledge* will easily find that thef acts as they actually exist run counter to the above contention of the learned author. He will find, in effect, that the so-called 'generally received theory' which Berkeley summarises in sections 7 to 9 is, in fact, Locke's own theory of abstraction as advocated in his famous *Essay*. It is true that Locke *is not expressly referred to* in those sections, and that he is first mentioned only in the opening lines of section eleven. But the following comparison of the above sections with the relevant portions of the *Essay* will easily convince the reader that even in those sections

1. *Development of Berkeley's Philosophy* pp. 118—19.

2. *Ibid* p. 120.

Berkeley has specially in view the *Essay* of John Locke and not any other philosophical treatise.[1]

While illustrating the theory of abstraction which he is soon to attack, Berkeley inserts an instance and employs a phraseology that bear a close resemblance to the language used in the *Essay* in the same connection. "For example," writes the Irish critic, "the mind having observed that Peter, James, and John resemble each other in certain *common agreements of shape and other qualities, leaves out of the complex or compounded idea it has of Peter, James* and any other particular man, *that which is peculiar to each, retaining only what is common to all,* and so makes an abstract idea wherein all *the particulars* equally *partake.*"[2] Let the reader now compare this with the following passage from Locke in which he is describing the process by which children form an abstract idea of man: "Afterwards, when time and a larger acquaintance has made them observe that there are a great many other things in the world, that in *some common agreements of shape and several other qualities,* resemble their father and mother and those persons they have been used to, they frame an idea which they find *those many particulars do partake in*; and to that they give, with others, the name 'man,' for example. And thus they come to have a general name, and a general idea. Wherein they make nothing new,

1. In the following passages those portions that specially bring out the resemblance have been printed in italics with a view to attract the reader's attention to them.

2. *Introduction* s. 9.

but only *leave out of the complex idea they had of Peter and James*, Mary and Jane, *that which is peculiar to each, and retain only what is common to them all*"[1] Even a cursory glance at these two passages will convince any reader that what Berkeley has done in the above passage of his is only to rewrite in a slightly different language what his predecessor had written in the *Essay*.

There are however some more instances of the close resemblance between the phraseology of the two great philosophers. "Moreover" proceeds Berkeley in his statement of the doctrine, "there being a great variety of other creatures that *partake in some parts, but not all, of the complex idea of man*, the mind, leaving out those parts which are peculiar to men, and *retaining those only which are common to all the living creatures, frames the idea of 'animal', which abstracts not only from all particular men, but also all birds, beasts, fishes, and insects. The* constituent parts of the abstract idea of animal are body, *life, sense, and spontaneous motion.*"[2] Now compare with this the words of Locke: "Observing that several things that *differ from their idea of man*, and cannot therefore be comprehended under that name, *have yet certain qualities wherein they agree with man*, by *retaining only those qualities*, and uniting them into one idea, they have again and a more general idea.... which new idea is made not by any new addition but only as before by leaving out the shape and some other properties signified by the name man, and retaining only a body, *with life, sense, and*

1. *Essay*, III, iii. 7.
2. *Op cit.* s 9.

spontaneous motion, comprehended under the name animal"[1] Cnly the blind and the prejudiced will be unable to make out the close resemblance between the two sets of passages.

In fact, the entire language of sections seven to ten constantly reminds one of the doctrine of abstract ideas as expounded in the famous *Essay*. And if Locke is not expressly referred to in these sections by Berkeley, it will now prove not the conclusion that Dr. Johnston wants to draw from it, but an altogether different one which may not be quite palatable to him. To add one more instance Berkeley italicises, with a view to emphasising, the word 'consider' in the following sentence: "But, we are told, *the mind being able to consider each quality singly, or abstracted from those other qualities with which it is united, does by that means frame to itself abstract ideas.*"[1] Now the emphasis laid upon the word 'consider' will be apparent when we compare the above with the following analogous sentence from Locke's treatise: "To prevent this (i. e. the necessity of naming each particular idea), the mind makes the particulari deas, received from particular objects, to become general, which is done by considering them as they are in the mind such appearances, separate from all other existences, and the circumstances of real existence, as time, place, or any other concomitant ideas. This is called abstraction."[2]

1. *Op. cit.* s. 7.
2. *Essay*, II, xi. 9.

We have already given above enough proof to convince an impartial reader of the virtue of our contention that the theory epitomised by Berkeley in sections seven to ten of his *Introduction to the Principles*, is evidently nothing else than the theory that Locke himself had advocated in his famous treatise. But if any further proof is still needed, the following will afford it. We find the following words at the end of the tenth section: "It is said they (i. e. the abstract ideas) are difficult and not to be attained without pains and study; we may reasonably conclude that, if such there be, they are confined only to the learned." Now this sentence, with its introductory words 'It is said', evidently refers to the following statement in the *Essay*: "For, when we nicely reflect upon them, we shall find that general ideas are fictions and contrivances of the mind, that carry difficulty with them, and do not so easily offer themselves as we are apt to imagine. For example, does it not require some pains and skill to form the general idea of a triangle; etc."[1]

Let us consider a minor point that Dr. Johnston mentions in his argument quoted above. He adduces in his support the fact that Berkeley introduces his statement of the theory of abstraction by the words 'It is agreed on all hands', thus conveying, in the opinion of the learned doctor, the sense that the theory which immediately follows is therefore not Locke's or any other philosopher's theory in particular, but the generally accepted theory. But we may at this stage at once rejoin that in view of our above contention, the words 'It is agreed on all hands'

1. *Essay*, IV, vii, 9.

should be interpreted as governing not the two following sections in their entirety but only the first sentence of the seventh section. The opening word ('but') of the next sentence points to the same conclusion. Berkeley wishes thereby to contrast an alleged statement of the sponsors of the doctrine of abstraction with an universally acknowledged fact that qualities exist in reality not separately but in combinations.

To conclude, we have thus fully exploded Dr. Johnston's statement that the view which Berkeley states is not intended to represent Locke's theory. We may just revert his own statement and complain that it has been too rashly *denied* that the statement of the theory of abstraction as given by Berkeley in sections seven to nine of the *Introduction to the Principles*, represents the theory that Locke had advocated in his *Essay*. We have seen that Berkeley has throughout Locke's doctrine in view; and therefore, that in all the labours that Berkeley has undertaken to prove that no *mental picture* of any of the alleged abstract ideas is possible, he has undoubtedly gone besides the point and thus committed the fallacy of *Ignoratio Elenchi*, for Locke himself never asserted any such possibility of forming a mental picture of his abstract ideas.

Having thus considered the implication of sections six to ten of Berkeley's *Introduction to the Principles* let us now turn our attention to what Dr. Johnston has to say regarding those sections, beginning from the eleventh, in which Locke has been explicitly named and referred to. According to him, Berkeley criticises in these sections three of Locke's own 'arguments' in support of the doctrine

of abstraction [1] In the third 'argument' of Locke Dr. Johnston refers to his famous classical example of the abstract idea of a triangle in general. Now Berkeley, as the reader must be knowing full well by this time, attacked all such abstract ideas and totally denied all possibility of forming any mental picture of such a triangle in general. But Locke never meant that his abstract idea of a triangle in general can be mentally represented. It would, however, appear from the laudatory remarks that he passes on Berkeley's criticisms of all the three 'arguments',[1] that the criticism offered by Berkeley especially on psychological grounds against Locke's *locus classicus* on the general idea of a triangle is, in the opinion of Dr. Johnston, perfectly valid and involves no *Ignoratio Elenchi.* We have on the contrary conclusively shown in chapter IV of our first book that while Berkeley with all his laborious psychological arguments only proves at best that we are unable to form a *mental picture* of the abstract idea of a triangle in general, Locke never meant that we can do so. In fact, Locke himself admits at once that " In effect, it is something imperfect, that cannot exist." And here, unless one were to suppose Locke to be so ignorant as not to understand the impossibility of representing mentally whatever does not actually exist, Locke must evidently be said to have himself denied by means of these words all possibility of having a mental representation of the general idea of a triangle, and Berkeley must therefore be said to have gone besides the proper point in his criticism of Locke's idea of a triangle in general.

1. *Development of Berkeley's Philosophy* pp. 122—23

I will bring this appendix to a close with a conclusion that, I believe, will perhaps appear novel and interesting to many of my readers. We have already proved above the sorry fact that what Berkeley laboriously established Locke had never asserted. Let us now come to the second half, which in collaboration with the first half will make a complete whole in our favour. We shall now see that what Berkeley himself admits later on as the true theory of abstraction is, in fact, the same that Locke himself had in reality maintained in his *Essay.* Many might not possibly be knowing that in spite of the violent criticisms passed by Berkeley on Locke's theory of abstraction the conclusions at which both arrive are after all essentially analogous. This established, our contention that the Berkeleyan onslaught in question against Locke is a glaring instance of *Ignoratio Elenchi* will have been proved beyond doubt.

Berkeley states his own doctrine of the universality of ideas in these words: "An idea which, considered in itself is particular, becomes general by being made to represent or stand for all other particular ideas of the same sort."[1] Now, what else did Locke himself advocate ? "Words are general, " writes the great Englishman, "as has been said, when used for signs of general ideas; and so are applicable indifferently to many particular things: and ideas are general when they are set up as the representatives of many particular things." As for Berkeley's insistence on the point that the general idea is in itself particular, Locke is no less emphatic on this point: "Universality belongs

1. *Op. cit.* s. 12.

not to things themselves, which are all of them particular in their existence. even those words and ideas which in their signification are general;"[1] and as for the admission, in one sense, on the part of Locke of the ideas of motion and extension *in general*, Berkeley himself too admits it. "For example, when it is said 'the change of motion is proportional to the impressed force', or that 'whatever has extension is divisible,' these propositions are to be understood of *motion and extension in general.*"[2]

In fact. a careful reader of the two great authors will find it no easy task to differentiate between the conclusions they arrive at. "*Universality*", to quote Berkeley, "so far as I can comprehend, not consisting in the absolute, positive nature or conception of any thing, but in the *relation* it bears to the particulars signified or represented by it; by virtue whereof it is that things, names, or notions, being in their own nature *particular*, are rendered *universal.*"[3] Now if Berkeley would have taken a little more pains than what he seems to have taken, he would have easily found out that Locke's contention is nothing different from his own. "When therefore" remarks the misunderstood philosopher, "we quit particulars, the generals that rest are only creatures of our own making, *their general nature being nothing but the capacity* they are put into by the understanding *of signifying or representing many particulars*. For the signification they have is nothing but a *relation* that by the mind of man is added to them."[4]

1. *Essay*, III, iii, 11. 2. *Op. cit* s. 11. (Italics mine).
3. *Ibid* s. 15.
4. *Essay*. III, iii, 1. (Italics mine). The reader should observe that not only the meaning but even the terminology bears a close resemblance.

The crux of the whole situation is reached when in section sixteen of the *Introduction* Berkeley is dealing with an important self-raised question as to why a geometrical proposition that is proved true only of one particular triangle is accepted as true with regard to *any and every* triangle in this world. Here at last the cat comes out of the bag and Berkeley is obliged to admit in plainest words that the idea of a triangle as used in such a proof is divested of all its particularities and considered only in its general aspects. " And here it must be acknowledged that a man may consider a figure merely as triangular, without attending to the particular qualities of the angles, or relations of the sides. So far he may abstract."[1] But this is just what Locke wanted to connote by means of his classical instance of a triangle in general, and which in a former mood Berkeley himself unjustifiably criticised. According to Locke too, abstraction is nothing more than considering a quality apart from its usual concomitants, which in real existence do never appear in separation.

In fine, Berkeley's attack on Locke's doctrine of abstraction is perhaps one of the most glaring instances of the fallacy of *Ignoratio Elenchi* ever committed by so great a philosopher in the entire history of philosophical speculations. It is difficult to find a parallel to the present case in which a great and learned philosopher, himself propounding the same conclusions regarding any problem as another great author, yet criticises erroneously the latter's conclusions, miserably misunderstanding his clear intent. The instances and the comparisons we have

1. *Op. cit.* s. 16.

supplied above will more than convince any reasonable unprejudiced critic, that the view which Dr. Johnston takes regarding the merits of Berkeley's attack on Locke's doctrine of abstraction is entirely wrong, and that Berkeley has in this discussion undoubtedly gone besides the proper point and has argued in a manner that betrays a woeful 'ignorance of refutation.'

APPENDIX B.

(BEING AN APPENDIX TO BOOK III.)

A Brief additional note on the connection, in Berkeley's philosophy, between the finite minds and the Infinite Being.

The one most important result of Berkeley's philosophy as he himself claims it, is to bring us human beings far more near the Infinite Being than in other systems. We directly move, as he writes, and have our very being in Him; and there is no more any room for the *tertium quid* of inert senseless matter. God or the Divine Spirit is every moment causing the innumerable ideas that we constantly perceive around us; and all the experience of the finite spirits thus owes its very existence to the benevolent activity of God.

Causality, as Berkeley holds, implies power or activity. But, ideas being inert and powerless can cause nothing; and Spirit is thus the only cause. But do the finite spirits cause anything ? Or is God the sole cause of everything ?

Now, Berkeley knew too well that to assign with Malebranche, Geulinx, and other Occasionalists, all causality—proximate as well as ultimate—to the Divine Spirit, denying it *totally* to the finite spirits, is to destroy all moral responsibility and with it all possibility of any rational ethics. If I am not in the real sense the cause of my ideas, how can I ever be held responsible for them ?

Berkeley therefore distinguishes between causality as applied to the *perceptions* and the same as applied to the *volitions* or acts. As for the perceptions, God is their sole cause. All the ideas that we ever perceive are caused, unless they be the immediate results of our own *actions*, by God, in whose mind all our ideas exist in a permanent archetypal state.

But when he came to the question of the *actions* of the finite spirits, he found, as said above, that to assign total causality to God in this case is to destory all morality. He, therefore, assigned to God *ultimate* causality of all our acts, while proximate causality of their active experience was assigned to the spirits themselves. "I have no where said" writes Berkeley in the *Dialogues* while explaining his own position in this respect, "that God is the only agent whe produces all the motions in bodies. It is true I have denied there are any other agents besides spirits; but this is very consistent with allowing to thinking rational beings, in the production of motions, the use of limited powers, ultimately indeed derived from God, but immediately under the direction of their own wills, which is sufficient to entitle them to all the guilt of their actions."[1] Now such an experience, involving the free use of their limited powers on the part of the finite spirits, is of two sorts: Imaginative, when we ourselves create mental images in us; and Volitional, when as the effect of our will we cause certain limited motions in our own bodies or the external things. Berkeley's philosophy is in this respect much superior to the extreme Occasionalism;

1. *Third Dialogue between Hylas and Philonous*, s. 13.

and is better reconciled with moral responsibility and freedom. Berkeley assigns absolute causality to God without denying partial causality to men; the same being also done as to their reality. While God alone possesses absolute reality, the finite selves are favoured only with a partial and limited reality, as their nature is only partly active, being partly passive too.[1]

All this shows how the connection between God and the finite spirits is so maintained by Berkeley as both to render morality and ethics possible, as well as to enable him to stick closely to the belief that the whole universe—including the active finite spirits and the inert ideas—is ultimately grounded in God, and derives its whole being from Him, in whose goodness, benevolence, and kindness Berkeley has the intensest faith. Berkeley's is an intensely religious conception, and his philosophy, specially in those parts wherein he expounds the doctrine of objective idealism, is one that is most fitted to bring happiness and consolation in the decaying years of life.

That the omniscience and the omnipotence of God is a fact which Berkeley would never have compromised at any time, is shown clearly in his account of the Natural Immortality of the Soul. The individual soul, he maintains, is a simple indivisible being and as such

1. Cf. Morris on this point: "They (the finite spirits) are thus wholly dependent for their activity and reality on God though in a different sense from that in which the physical world is dependent on God, in that they enjoy a certain measure of real freedom and activity in the moral life." (*Locke, Berkeley, and Hume*, p. 99).

can not be destroyed, and is consequently immortal. But the (natural) immortality of the soul, as Berkeley immediately adds, does not mean that *God* is powerless to destroy them. but only that they can not be dissolved or destroyed by the ordinary laws of *nature*. As for God, He has himself created them, and can also at a mere fiat of His will destroy any number of them in no time.

Berkeley's philosophy is in this respect, then, a sincere attempt at a conciliation between the absolute causality of God and the moral responsibility and freedom of the finite spirits.[1]

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1. The subject matter of the above appendix can also be treated from a different standpoint; the central question from this aspect of the problem being thus formulated: What is the relation between the *substance* of the finite spirits and that of the Infinite One ? Are the former part and parcel of the latter ? Or, are the finite minds, as some Indian philosophers held, *reflections* of the Divine Being ? It is complained that Berkeley's treatment of the problem of the relation between the two classes of spirits, from this aspect, is not at all satisfactory. Though he maintains constantly that the finite spirits are *created* by God, he nevertheless fails to offer a satisfactory explanation of this very important metaphysical proposition. Created, but out of what ? Matter is of course out of question. Are these spirits then created by God *out of himself* ? Are they really not distinct from their creator, and is their feeling of separateness from Him only are sult of an illusion or a mistaken notion ? The reader need not be informed as to how near such a position comes to that of the Indian philosophers. Berkeley has actually referred to this alternative at one place in the *Siris*, though with cold indifference and without any attempt to offer any sound criticism of it. (*Vide Siris* s. 326). In any case, we conclude, Berkeley has failed to face these very important metaphysical problems from these aspects, and has thus left a serious gap in his explanation of the nature and existence of this entire universe.

APPENDIX C.

(BEING AN APPENDIX TO BOOK II CHAPTER I.)

A critical discussion of Berkeley's answers to some of the important objections urged against his new conception of matter.

Novel and startling as Berkeley's conclusions certainly appear even to this day, they occasioned within a short time of their publication a plentiful crop of objections from various quarters; which with great ingenuity and a clever show of consistency, Berkeley attempted to refute in sections 34 to 84 of his *Principles of Human Knowledge*. Many of these attempted answers throw considerable light on Berkeley's real view concerning the nature and existence of the material substance; and a critical study of these is certainly very instructive for an earnest student of his idealism Some of these have been already discussed in our previous chapters, and we propose to deal here in brief only with those important answers which have not so far been touched by us.

FIRST OBJECTION. Since all things are said to exist only in the mind, and to be nothing but ideas, all that is real and substantial in nature has thus been banished out of the world, only a chimerical scheme of ideas being left behind.

Berkeley's answer to this objection may be analysed into the following three points:—(i) Real things have not been reduced on his principles to the level of mere chimeras

or ideas of our own framing; on the other hand, a clear distinction has been maintained between the two. Thus, real things are more steady, vivid, clear, distinct, orderly, strong and lively than the creatures of our fancy; and while the perceptions of real things obey certain definite laws and are caused directly by the divine Being, the chimerical ideas do not follow any such regular order—and owe their origin to our own will. (ii) It is true that the word 'idea' sounds very unfamiliar when applied to the external objects of sense-perception, but its use has been retained because it has the following advantages over the term 'thing':—(a) 'Thing' is a wider term and includes both the active spirits that perceive as well as the inert objects that are perceived; the term 'idea' stands only for the latter; (b) the term 'thing' generally implies the conception of an existence independent of the mind; the term 'idea' implies nothing of the kind. (iii) Lastly, nothing that is real has been taken away, since whatever is perceived by sense has been held to be absolutely real. It is only the 'philosophical substance', supposed to be an entity different from the qualities it has, and which is not perceived by any of our senses—only such an impossible abstraction has been removed, which, however, existed neither in reality nor even in imagination. So far as the common-sense man is concerned, therefore, he will not find any real thing removed by the new principles, since to him a thing is nothing apart from a cluster of perceived qualities, and these have already been admitted to be real.

We may offer the following few points in criticism of the above clever answer.

(i) According to Berkeley's contention, the perceptions of real things have "more reality" in them than those of mere ideas in the mind. But do these two differ only in *degree*? Does not the admission of some sort of objective (divine) causation in the case of the former, which is absent in the case of the latter, point to a difference of *kind* among the two?[1]

(ii) Berkeley employs the term 'idea' at times in a most ambiguous manner and then its use becomes most objectionable. (*Vide supra* p. 281.) If he would have really employed the term throughout his philosophy only in the sense of 'an immediate object of sense-perception that has an objective existence external to each particular finite percipient', its use would have been far less objected to.

(iii) Here Berkeley merely plays upon the words 'what we perceive and feel." His contention is that he

1. What is the difference, according to Berkeley, between actually perceiving a thing and dreaming that it is being perceived by us? As compared with actual perceptions, he writes, "the visions of a dream are dim, irregular, and confused. And, though they should happen to be never so lively and natural, yet, by their not being connected, and of a piece with the preceding and subsequent transactions of our lives, they might easily be distinguished from realities." (*Third Dialogue* s. 10). Of course, there is the additional difference that while the perceptions of real things are divinely caused, those in dreams are not. As for our own view regarding the real difference between these two sorts of perceptions, *vide supra* pp. 110-116.

admits the reality of all that is immediately perceived by the senses. But are qualities alone immediately perceived, and is a thing nothing but its qualities? This question has been discussed sufficiently in Book II chapter I, where we have finally answered it in the negative. If, then, we hold that in each act of external perception, we do perceive some material object in addition to the qualities it possesses, Berkeley's pious assurances that "I do not argue against the existence of any one thing that we can comprehend either by sense or reflection," or that "By the principles premised we are not deprived of any one thing in nature," cannot be allowed to pass without a contradiction or at least a qualification.[1]

SECOND OBJECTION:—We actually perceive a difference between a real fire and a mere idea of it. How can both be 'in the mind'?

1. On numerous occasions does Berkeley assert that his philosophy is in agreement with the commonsense notions. Thus we find him remarking at the end of the *Third Dialogue*, that his philosophy really does nothing but to unite the views of the vulgar and the philosophers:—"the former being of opinion, that *those things they immediately perceive are the real things*; and the latter, that *the things immediately perceived are ideas which exist only in the mind.* Which two notions, put together, do, in effect, constitute the substance of what I advance." Now, in all such passages Berkeley really plays upon the ambiguity of the words "what we see and feel," and "existing in the mind." See Ueberweg's *History of Philosophy*, translated by Morris, pp. 88-89, footnote.

In answer to this, Berkeley compares the case of fire with that of pain. Does not an actual sensation of pain differ from a mere idea of it? And yet will any one maintain that the former is not really in the mind?

But is Berkeley justified in drawing this analogy between the sensations of pain and fire? Now, we may at once observe in this connection that he himself admits, that the objects of external sense-perceptions are certainly independent of the perceiving mind, so far as a finite individual is concerned. When I perceive a tree or a fire, such tree or fire is *not in my mind*, but outside it. "Take here in brief my meaning" he writes in the *Dialogues*, "—It is evident that the things I perceive are my own ideas, and that no idea can exist unless it be in a mind. *Nor is it less plain that these things or ideas by me perceived, either themselves or their archetypes, exist independently of my mind.*"[1] But will Berkeley admit the same with regard to the sensations of pain also? Can they be also independent of the particular mind that experiences them? If not, how can fire be declared to be *in the mind* in the same sense in which a pain may be said to be?[2]

1. *Second Dialogue* s. 8. (Italics mine). See also *supra* pp. 142, 160, 268-79, 287 etc; as also *Second Dialogue* s. 5, and *Third Dialogue* s. 4, 9, 24 etc.

2. In conformity with his own statements elsewhere, Berkeley ought really to have answered the present objection by arguing that while the chimerical idea of fire is in the mind of each particular person who thinks of it, when the real fire is declared to be in the mind, it is not any one percipient mind in particular that is meant, but all minds whatsoever. [See, *inter alia*, *Third Dialogue* s. 4.]

THIRD OBJECTION:—We actually see things at a distance from us. How can we, then, declare them to be 'in the mind'?

Berkeley's answer to this objection contains two chief points:—(i) We believe even in dreams that we perceive things at a distance, and yet they exist nowhere but in the mind; (ii) but, secondly, distance is not perceived by sight at all and is only an object of the sensations of touch.

For a critical consideration of the first point, the reader is referred to pp. 110-116; and for that of the second, to pp. 303-304.

TENTH OBJECTION:—If Berkeley's doctrine of *esse est percipi* is to be accepted, several facts in Philosophy and Mathematics, believed to have real existence, (e. g. the motion of the earth) will have to be declared non-existing since they can never be perceived by sense.

Berkeley's answer to this is in the negative. For, he argues, a thing is to be declared on his principles as existing, not only when it is being subjected to an actual sense-perception, but also when by virtue of "sure and well grounded" predictions we are justified in believing that if placed at a certain distance and in a certain position, we *should be able to perceive* it.

Berkeley's answer to the present objection introduces into his system an extremely important qualification, the magnitude and the far-reaching consequences of which he

seems hardly to have adequately realised. His present answer modifies in a very important manner his former definition of 'existence' as applied to sensible things, in as much as the *esse* of an idea is now admitted to consist not necessarily in *actual percipi* alone, but even in *possible percipi* too. But will this not throw the entire world of science into great confusion ? Thus we may attract the reader's attention to the following three important points:—

(i) Even philosophers, mathematicians and scientists are often found to hold conflicting views regarding many important problems, each side asserting that its arguments are most "sure and well grounded". How are we to decide in such cases whether a thing (or fact) alleged to exist by one party and denied by the other, exists really or no ?

(ii) Secondly, it is a fact of common observation that a belief held most closely by the entire world of scientists and laymen alike, is with an advancement in knowledge manytimes declared groundless, and finally renounced Shall we say here that with such change in belief, the *facts* also change ? It would appear that if, as Berkeley maintains, "The question whether the earth moves or no amounts in reality to *no more than this*, to wit, whether we have reason to conclude, from what has been observed by astronomers, that if we were placed in such and such circumstances,"[1] we *should* perceive the earth as moving, ----if really so, we must declare the earth as moving so long as we have such reasons to believe in its motion, while

1. *Principles* s. 58 (Italics mine)

the moment such reasons are disproved and refuted the earth must forthwith be declared to have stopped its motion !

(iii) Lastly, who is to judge with certainty whether our predictions on any particular occasion are *really* "sure and wellgrounded", since *ex hypothesi* they are incapable of direct verification ?

In fine, as a clever reader will easily perceive, all these difficulties owe their origin to the fact that Berkeley's above answer virtually makes the question of objective reality turn entirely upon the subjective factor of belief.

It is interesting to observe that in the *Dialogues* Berkeley has refused to maintain any such distinction between an actual and a possible perception, between a 'perceivable' and a 'perceived' idea. Thus we observe the following remarks in the *Third Dialogue*:—

Hylas: Yes, Philonous, I grant the existence of a sensible thing consists in being perceivable, but not in being actually perceived.

Philonous: And what is perceivable but an idea ? And can an idea exist without being *actually* perceived ? These are points long since agreed between us.

(*Third Dialogue* s. 9. Italics mine.)

How will Berkeley reconcile this with his answer to the above objection given in the *Principles* ?[1]

1 Suppose Berkeley to have answered the present objection by maintaining that all such facts are real even

ELEVENTH OBJECTION—Since all ideas are declared to be inert and hence powerless to cause anything, what is the use of this entire material world, on the Principles of Berkeley ? Has God created it for nothing ?

Berkeley's answer to this important and interesting objection may be analytically stated as follows:—

[i] Though there might be some difficulties regarding the use of this material world, which he might be unable to explain, these nevertheless can not affect the truth of his principles which have been already established *a priori.*

[ii] Similar difficulties beset the doctrines of other philosophers too.

[iii] But to come to the question proper, the material world serves, on Berkeley's principles, the following important purposes:—

(a) Though the innumerable ideas that constitute the universe of external perception cannot be *causes* of any thing, they can certainly act as *signs* or prognostics; and a very useful mass of information is thus conveyed to us every moment by means of these ideas. They guide us every moment of our life and inform us of any pleasure or pain that is likely to accompany them. Hence, though none of these ideas is absolutely necessary for God to produce *any* effect, they are certainly necessary for the

on his own principles, because, though not perceived by any man, they are nevertheless perceived by God. What difference would it have made ?

maintainance of that constant regular order, with which God creates these countless ideas, only to benefit the helpless finite beings.

(b) All these countless ideas with their wonderful uniformity and order, convince us of the existence and attributes of the Infinite Spirit or God. (See further Book III chap. III).

(c) Lastly, these ideas demonstrate the existence of the other finite spirits besides one's own petty self. (See further Book III chap. II)

It was with the help of these three chief points that Berkeley maintained that even on his principles God cannot be said to have created this vast mechanism, to serve no useful purpose. We have however already shown in our previous discussions that Berkeley has no legitimate right to infer the existence of other finite spirits from the perception of any such external ideas (*vide supra* pp. 215-220); while as for the existence and attributes of God, these too have been shown to be based in reality on arguments quite different from those that merely depend upon certain inferences drawn from our perceptions of the external world (*vide supra* pp. 238-40). The fact is that the ordinary man believes without the least hesitation in the efficacy of the external material things to *cause* certain fixed effects that are connected with them by a necessary connection; and this Berkeley has certainly denied. His chief error therefore consisted in refusing to admit that the *immediate* cause of our external ideas of perception in the normal waking life is in each case some external *material* object which, though incapable of per-

forming *volitional* acts, is certainly capable of causing certain mechanical fixed effects and can thus serve us every moment of our life, though the *ultimate* cause of all is certainly God or the Infinite Being himself.

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